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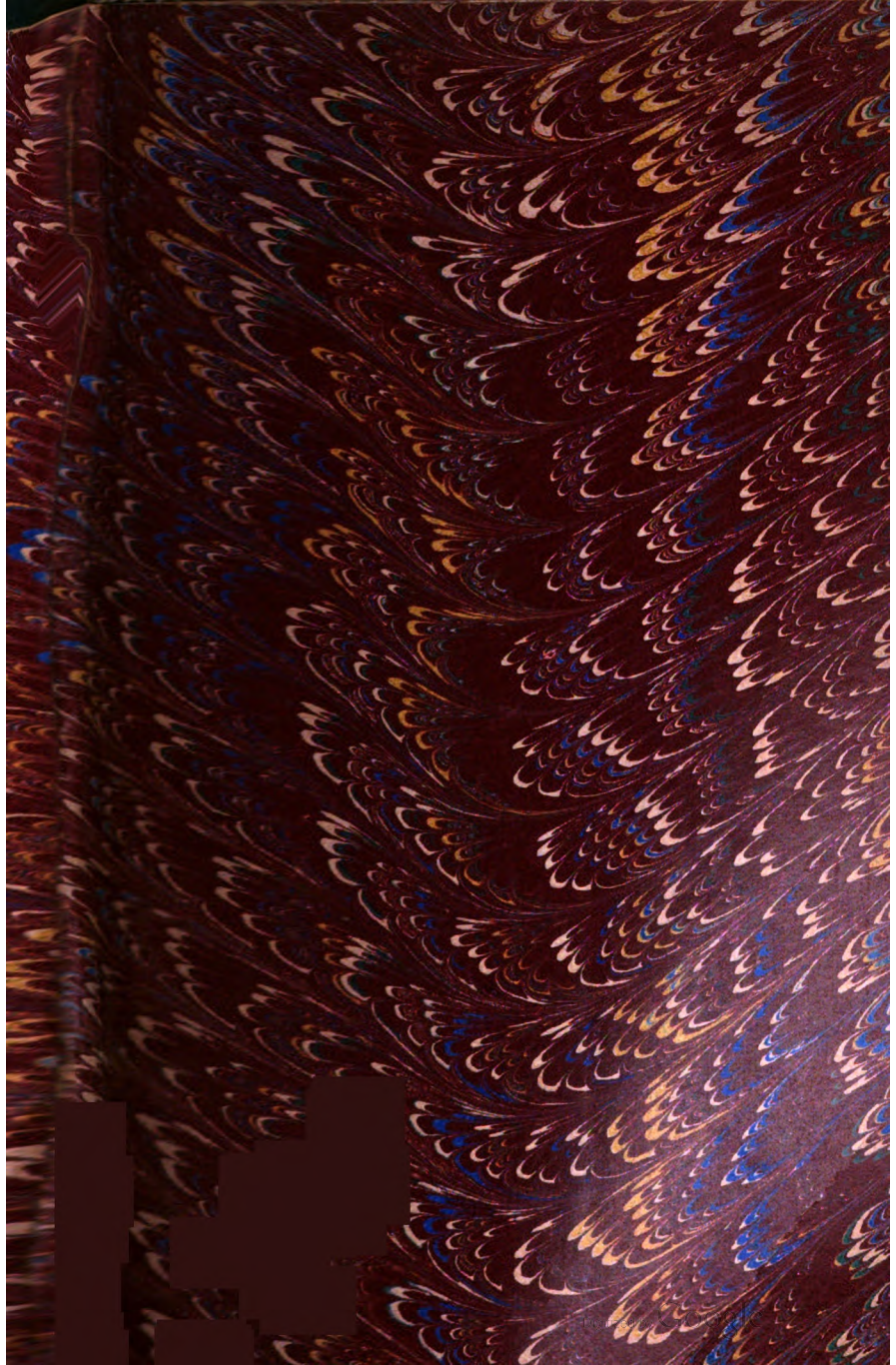

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WAVERLEY NOVELS

Centenary Edition

VOL. VIII.

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R. P. Bonnington. E. Goodall

QUENTIN DURWARD.

His opponent seeing himself thus menaced, laid hand upon his sword; but his more considerate comrade, who came up, commanded him to forbear and hearing to the young man, accused him in that of precipitation in plunging in the swollen ford.

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QUENTIN DURWARD

By SIR WALTER SCOTT, Bart.

La guerre est ma patrie,
Mon harnois ma maison,
Et en toute saison
Combattre c'est ma vie.

PLESSIS-LES-TOURS

EDINBURGH: ADAM & CHARLES BLACK

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THE scene of this romance is laid in the fifteenth century, when the feudal system, which had been the sinews and nerves of national defence, and the spirit of chivalry, by which, as by a vivifying soul, that system was animated, began to be innovated upon and abandoned by those grosser characters who centred their sum of happiness in procuring the personal objects on which they had fixed their own exclusive attachment. The same egotism had indeed displayed itself even in more primitive ages; but it was now for the first time openly avowed as a professed principle of action. The spirit of chivalry had in it this point of excellence, that however overstrained and fantastic many of its doctrines may appear to us, they were all founded on generosity and self-denial, of which if the earth were deprived, it would be difficult to conceive the existence of virtue among the human race.

Among those who were the first to ridicule and abandon the self-denying principles in which the young knight was instructed, and to which he was so carefully trained up, Louis the XIth of France was the chief. That Sovereign was of a character so purely selfish—so guiltless of entertaining any purpose unconnected with his ambition, covetousness, and desire of selfish enjoyment, that he almost seems an

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incarnation of the devil himself, permitted to do his utmost to corrupt our ideas of honour in its very source. Nor is it to be forgotten that Louis possessed to a great extent that caustic wit which can turn into ridicule all that a man does for any other person's advantage but his own, and was, therefore, peculiarly qualified to play the part of a cold-hearted and sneering friend.

In this point of view, Goethe's conception of the character and reasoning of Mephistophiles, the tempting spirit in the singular play of Faust, appears to me more happy than that which has been formed by Byron, and even than the Satan of Milton. These last great authors have given to the Evil Principle something which elevates and dignifies his wickedness; a sustained and unconquerable resistance against Omnipotence itself—a lofty scorn of suffering compared with submission, and all those points of attraction in the Author of Evil, which have induced Burns and others to consider him as the Hero of the Paradise Lost. The great German poet has, on the contrary, rendered his seducing spirit a being who, otherwise totally unimpassioned, seems only to have existed for the purpose of increasing, by his persuasions and temptations, the mass of moral evil, and who calls forth by his seductions those slumbering passions which otherwise might have allowed the human being who was the object of the Evil Spirit's operations to pass the tenor of his life in tranquillity. For this purpose Mephistophiles is, like Louis XI., endowed with an acute and depreciating spirit of caustic wit, which is employed incessantly in undervaluing and vilifying all actions, the consequences of which do not lead certainly and directly to self-gratification.

Even an author of works of mere amusement may be permitted to be serious for a moment, in order to reprobate all policy, whether of a public or private character, which rests its basis upon the principles of Machiavel, or the practice of Louis XI.

The cruelties, the perjuries, the suspicions of this prince, were rendered more detestable, rather than amended, by the gross and debasing superstition which he constantly practised. The devotion to the heavenly saints, of which he made such a parade, was upon the miserable principle of some deputy in office, who endeavours to hide or atone for the malversations of which he is conscious, by liberal gifts to those whose duty it is to observe his conduct, and endeavours to support a system of fraud, by an attempt to corrupt the incorruptible. In no other light can we regard his creating the Virgin Mary a countess and colonel of his guards, or the cunning that admitted to one or two peculiar forms of oath the force of a binding

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obligation, which he denied to all other, strictly preserving the secret, which mode of swearing he really accounted obligatory, as one of the most valuable of state mysteries.

To a total want of scruple, or, it would appear, of any sense whatever of moral obligation, Louis XI. added great natural firmness and sagacity of character, with a system of policy so highly refined, considering the times he lived in, that he sometimes overreached himself by giving way to its dictates.

Probably there is no portrait so dark as to be without its softer shades. He understood the interests of France, and faithfully pursued them so long as he could identify them with his own. He carried the country safe through the dangerous crisis of the war termed "for the public good;" in thus disuniting and dispersing this grand and dangerous alliance of the great crown vassals of France against the Sovereign, a King of a less cautious and temporising character, and of a more bold and less crafty disposition than Louis XI., would, in all probability, have failed. Louis had also some personal accomplishments not inconsistent with his public character. He was cheerful and witty in society; caressed his victim like the cat, which can fawn when about to deal the most bitter wound; and none was better able to sustain and extol the superiority of the coarse and selfish reasons by which he endeavoured to supply those nobler motives for exertion, which his predecessors had derived from the high spirit of chivalry.

In fact, that system was now becoming ancient, and had, even while in its perfection, something so overstrained and fantastic in its principles, as rendered it peculiarly the object of ridicule, whenever, like other old fashions, it began to fall out of repute, and the weapons of raillery could be employed against it, without exciting the disgust and horror with which they would have been rejected at an early period, as a species of blasphemy. In the fifteenth century a tribe of scoffers had arisen, who pretended to supply what was naturally useful in chivalry by other resources, and threw ridicule upon the extravagant and exclusive principles of honour and virtue, which were openly treated as absurd, because, in fact, they were cast in a mould of perfection too lofty for the practice of fallible beings. If an ingenuous and high-spirited youth proposed to frame himself on his father's principles of honour, he was vulgarly derided as if he had brought to the field the good old knight's Durindarte, or two-handed sword, ridiculous from its antique make and fashion, although its blade might be the Ebro's temper, and its ornaments of pure gold.

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In like manner, the principles of chivalry were cast aside, and their aid supplied by baser stimulants. Instead of the high spirit which pressed every man forward in the defence of his country, Louis XI. substituted the exertions of the ever-ready mercenary soldier, and persuaded his subjects, among whom the mercantile class began to make a figure, that it was better to leave to mercenaries the risks and labours of war, and to supply the Crown with the means of paying them, than to peril themselves in defence of their own substance. The merchants were easily persuaded by this reasoning. The hour did not arrive, in the days of Louis XI., when the landed gentry and nobles could be in like manner excluded from the ranks of war; but the wily monarch commenced that system, which, acted upon by his successors, at length threw the whole military defence of the state into the hands of the Crown.

He was equally forward in altering the principles which were wont to regulate the intercourse of the sexes. The doctrines of chivalry had established, in theory at least, a system in which Beauty was the governing and remunerating divinity—Valour her slave, who caught his courage from her eye, and gave his life for her slightest service. It is true, the system here, as in other branches, was stretched to fantastic extravagance, and cases of scandal not unfrequently arose. Still they were generally such as those mentioned by Burke, where frailty was deprived of half its guilt, by being purified from all its grossness. In Louis XIth's practice, it was far otherwise. He was a low voluptuary, seeking pleasure without sentiment, and despising the sex from whom he desired to obtain it; his mistresses were of inferior rank, as little to be compared with the elevated though faulty character of Agnes Sorel, as Louis was to his heroic father, who freed France from the threatened yoke of England. In like manner, by selecting his favourites and ministers from among the dregs of the people, Louis showed the slight regard which he paid to eminent station and high birth; and although this might be not only excusable but meritorious, where the monarch's fiat promoted obscure talent, or called forth modest worth, it was very different when the King made his favourite associates of such men as Tristan l'Hermite, the chief of his Marshalsea, or police; and it was evident that such a prince could no longer be, as his descendant Francis elegantly designed himself, "the first gentleman in his dominions."

Nor were Louis's sayings and actions in private or public of a kind which could redeem such gross offences against the character of a man of honour. His word, generally accounted the most sacred

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*test of a man's character, and the least impeachment of which is a capital offence by the code of honour, was forfeited without scruple on the slightest occasion, and often accompanied by the perpetration of the most enormous crimes. If he broke his own personal and plighted faith, he did not treat that of the public with more ceremony. His sending an inferior person disguised as a herald to Edward IV., was in those days, when heralds were esteemed the sacred depositaries of public and national faith, a daring imposition, of which few save this unscrupulous prince would have been guilty.**

In short, the manners, sentiments, and actions of Louis XI. were such as were inconsistent with the principles of chivalry, and his caustic wit was sufficiently disposed to ridicule a system adopted on what he considered as the most absurd of all bases, since it was founded on the principle of devoting toil, talents, and time, to the accomplishment of objects, from which no personal advantage could, in the nature of things, be obtained.

It is more than probable that, in thus renouncing almost openly the ties of religion, honour, and morality, by which mankind at large feel themselves influenced, Louis sought to obtain great advantages in his negotiations with parties who might esteem themselves bound, while he himself enjoyed liberty. He started from the goal, he might suppose, like the racer who has got rid of the weights with which his competitors are still encumbered, and expects to succeed of course. But Providence seems always to unite the existence of peculiar danger with some circumstance which may put those exposed to the peril upon their guard. The constant suspicion attached to any public person who becomes badly eminent for breach of faith, is to him what the rattle is to the poisonous serpent; and men come at last to calculate, not so much on what their antagonist says, as upon that which he is likely to do; a degree of mistrust which tends to counteract the intrigues of such a faithless character, more than his freedom from the scruples of conscientious men can afford him advantage. The example of Louis XI. raised disgust and suspicion rather than a desire of imitation among other nations in Europe, and the circumstance of his outwitting more than one of his contemporaries, operated to put others on their guard. Even the system of chivalry, though much less generally extended than heretofore, survived this profligate monarch's reign, who did so much to sully its lustre, and long after the death of Louis XI. it inspired the Knight without Fear and Reproach, and the gallant Francis I.

* See Note T.

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Indeed, although the reign of Louis had been as successful in a political point of view as he himself could have desired, the spectacle of his deathbed might of itself be a warning-piece against the seduction of his example. Jealous of every one, but chiefly of his own son, he immured himself in his Castle of Plessis, intrusting his person exclusively to the doubtful faith of his Scottish mercenaries. He never stirred from his chamber; he admitted no one into it, and wearied Heaven and every saint with prayers, not for the forgiveness of his sins, but for the prolongation of his life. With a poverty of spirit totally inconsistent with his shrewd worldly sagacity, he importuned his physicians, until they insulted as well as plundered him. In his extreme desire of life he sent to Italy for supposed relics, and the yet more extraordinary importation of an ignorant crack-brained peasant, who, from laziness probably, had shut himself up in a cave, and renounced flesh, fish, eggs, or the produce of the dairy. This man, who did not possess the slightest tincture of letters, Louis reverenced as if he had been the Pope himself, and to gain his good-will founded two cloisters.

It was not the least singular circumstance of this course of superstition, that bodily health and terrestrial felicity seemed to be his only object. Making any mention of his sins when talking on the state of his health was strictly prohibited; and when at his command a priest recited a prayer to Saint Eutropius, in which he recommended the King's welfare both in body and soul, Louis caused the two last words to be omitted, saying it was not prudent to importune the blessed saint by too many requests at once. Perhaps he thought by being silent on his crimes, he might suffer them to pass out of the recollection of the celestial patrons, whose aid he invoked for his body.

So great were the well-merited tortures of this tyrant's deathbed, that Philip des Comines enters into a regular comparison between them and the numerous cruelties inflicted on others by his order; and considering both, comes to express an opinion, that the worldly pangs and agony suffered by Louis were such as might compensate the crimes he had committed, and that, after a reasonable quarantine in purgatory, he might in mercy be found duly qualified for the superior regions.

Fénélon also has left his testimony against this prince, whose mode of living and governing he has described in the following remarkable passage:—

"Pygmalion, tourmenté par une soif insatiable des richesses, se rend de plus en plus misérable et odieux à ses sujets. C'est un crime

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à Tyr que d'avoir de grands biens; l'avarice le rend défiant, soupçonneux, cruel; il persécute les riches, et il craint les pauvres.

"C'est un crime encore plus grand à Tyr d'avoir de la vertu; car Pygmalion suppose que les bons ne peuvent souffrir ses injustices et ses infamies; la vertu le condamne, il s'aigrit et s'irrite contre elle. Tout l'agite, l'inquiète, le ronge; il a peur de son ombre; il ne dort ni nuit ni jour; les Dieux, pour le confondre, l'accablent de trésors dont il n'ose jouir; Ce qu'il cherche pour être heureux est précisément ce qui l'empêche de l'être. Il regrette tout ce qu'il donne, et craint toujours de perdre; il se tourmente pour gagner.

"On ne le voit presque jamais; il est seul, triste, abattu, au fond de son palais; ses amis mêmes n'osent l'aborder, de peur de lui devenir suspects. Une garde terrible tient toujours des épées nues et des piques levées autour de sa maison. Trente chambres qui communiquent les unes aux autres, et dont chacune a une porte de fer avec six gros verroux, sont le lieu où il se renferme; on ne sait jamais dans laquelle de ces chambres il couche; et on assure qu'il ne couche jamais deux nuits de suite dans la même, de peur d'y être égorgé. Il ne connoît ni les doux plaisirs, ni l'amitié encore plus douce. Si on lui parle de chercher la joie, il sent qu'elle fuit loin de lui, et qu'elle refuse d'entrer dans son cœur. Ses yeux creux sont pleins d'un feu âpre et farouche; ils sont sans cesse errans de tous cotés; il prête l'oreille au moindre bruit, et se sent tout ému; il est pâle, défait, et les noirs soucis sont peints sur son visage toujours ridé. Il se tait, il soupire, il tire de son cœur de profonds gémissemens, il ne peut cacher les remords qui déchirent ses entrailles. Les mets les plus exquis le dégoûtent. Ses enfans, loin d'être son espérance, sont le sujet de sa terreur: il en a fait ses plus dangereux ennemis. Il n'a eu toute sa vie aucun moment d'assuré: il ne se conserve qu'à force de répandre le sang de tous ceux qu'il craint. Insensé, qui ne voit pas que sa cruauté, à laquelle il se confie, le fera périr! Quelqu'un de ses domestiques, aussi défiant que lui, se hâtera de délivrer le monde de ce monstre."

The instructive but appalling scene of this tyrant's sufferings was at length closed by death, 30th August 1485.

The selection of this remarkable person as the principal character in the romance—for it will be easily comprehended that the little love intrigue of Quentin is only employed as the means of bringing out the story—afforded considerable facilities to the Author. The whole of Europe was, during the fifteenth century, convulsed with dissensions from such various causes, that it would have required almost a dis-

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sertation to have brought the English reader with a mind perfectly alive and prepared to admit the possibility of the strange scenes to which he was introduced.

In Louis XIth's time extraordinary commotions existed throughout all Europe. England's civil wars were ended rather in appearance than reality, by the short-lived ascendency of the House of York. Switzerland was asserting that freedom which was afterwards so bravely defended. In the Empire, and in France, the great vassals of the crown were endeavouring to emancipate themselves from its control, while Charles of Burgundy by main force, and Louis more artfully by indirect means, laboured to subject them to subservience to their respective sovereignties. Louis, while with one hand he circumvented and subdued his own rebellious vassals, laboured secretly with the other to aid and encourage the large trading towns of Flanders to rebel against the Duke of Burgundy, to which their wealth and irritability naturally disposed them. In the more woodland districts of Flanders the Duke of Gueldres and William de la Marck, called from his ferocity the Wild Boar of Ardennes, were throwing off the habits of knights and gentlemen, to practise the violences and brutalities of common bandits.

A hundred secret combinations existed in the different provinces of France and Flanders; numerous private emissaries of the restless Louis—Bohemians, pilgrims, beggars, or agents disguised as such—were everywhere spreading the discontent which it was his policy to maintain in the dominions of Burgundy.

Amidst so great an abundance of materials it was difficult to select such as should be most intelligible and interesting to the reader; and the Author had to regret that, though he made liberal use of the power of departing from the reality of history, he felt by no means confident of having brought his story into a pleasing, compact, and sufficiently intelligible form. The main-spring of the plot is that which all who know the least of the feudal system can easily understand, though the facts are absolutely fictitious. The right of a feudal superior was in nothing more universally acknowledged than in his power to interfere in the marriage of a female vassal. This may appear to exist as a contradiction both of the civil and canon law, which declare that marriage shall be free, while the feudal or municipal jurisprudence, in case of a fief passing to a female, acknowledges an interest in the superior of the fief to dictate the choice of her companion in marriage. This is accounted for on the principle that the superior was, by his bounty, the original granter of the fief, and is still interested that the

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marriage of the vassal shall place no one there who may be inimical to his liege lord. On the other hand, it might be reasonably pleaded that this right of dictating to the vassal to a certain extent in the choice of a husband, is only competent to the superior from whom the fief is originally derived. There is therefore no violent improbability in a vassal of Burgundy flying to the protection of the King of France, to whom the Duke of Burgundy himself was vassal; nor is it a great stretch of probability to affirm that Louis, unscrupulous as he was, should have formed the design of betraying the fugitive into some alliance which might prove inconvenient, if not dangerous, to his formidable kinsman and vassal of Burgundy.

I may add, that the Romance of QUENTIN DURWARD, *which acquired a popularity at home more extensive than some of its predecessors, found, also, unusual success on the Continent, where the historical allusions awakened more familiar ideas.**

ABBOTSFORD, 1*st December* 1831.

* Note A. Reception of "Quentin Durward" abroad.

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*PREFACE—1823.**

And one who hath had losses—go to.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

WHEN honest Dogberry sums up and recites all the claims which he had to respectability, and which, as he opined, ought to have exempted him from the injurious appellation conferred on him by Master Gentleman Conrade, it is remarkable that he lays not more emphasis even upon his double gown (a matter of some importance in a certain ci-devant capital which I wot of), or upon his being "a pretty piece of flesh as any in Messina," or even upon the conclusive argument of his being "a rich *fellow enough," than upon his being* one that hath had losses.

Indeed, I have always observed your children of prosperity, whether by way of hiding their full glow of splendour from those whom fortune has treated more harshly, or whether that to have risen in spite of calamity is as honourable to their fortune as it is to a fortress to have undergone a siege—however this be, I have observed that such persons never fail to entertain you with an account of the damage they sustain by the hardness of the times. You seldom dine at a well-supplied table, but the intervals between the champagne, the Burgundy, and the hock, are filled, if your entertainer be a moneyed man, with the fall of interest and the difficulty of finding investments for cash, which is therefore lying idle on his hands; or, if he be a landed proprietor, with a woful detail of arrears and diminished rents. This hath its effects. The guests sigh and shake their heads in cadence with their landlord, look on the sideboard loaded with plate, sip once more the rich wines which flow around them in quick circulation, and think of the genuine benevolence which, thus stinted of its means, still lavishes all that it yet possesses on hospitality; and, what is yet more flattering, on the wealth which, undiminished by these losses, still continues, like the inexhaustible hoard of the generous Aboulcasem, to sustain, without impoverishment, such copious drains.

* It is scarcely necessary to say, that all that follows is imaginary.

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This querulous humour, however, hath its limits, like to the conning of grievances, which all valetudinarians know is a most fascinating pastime, so long as there is nothing to complain of but chronic complaints. But I never heard a man whose credit was actually verging to decay talk of the diminution of his funds; and my kind and intelligent physician assures me, that it is a rare thing with those afflicted with a good rousing fever, or any such active disorder, which

With mortal crisis doth portend
His life to appropinque an end,

to make their agonies the subject of amusing conversation.

Having deeply considered all these things, I am no longer able to disguise from my readers that I am neither so unpopular nor so low in fortune as not to have my share in the distresses which at present afflict the moneyed and landed interests of these realms. Your authors who live upon a mutton-chop may rejoice that it has fallen to threepence per pound, and if they have children, gratulate themselves that the peck-loaf may be had for sixpence; but we who belong to the tribe which is ruined by peace and plenty—we who have lands and beeves, and sell what these poor gleaners must buy—we are driven to despair by the very events which would make all Grub Street illuminate its attics, if Grub Street could spare candle-ends for the purpose. I therefore put in my proud claim to share in the distresses which only affect the wealthy; and write myself down, with Dogberry, "a rich fellow enough," but still "one who hath had losses."

With the same generous spirit of emulation, I have had lately recourse to the universal remedy for the brief impecuniosity of which I complain—a brief residence in a southern climate, by which I have not only saved many cart-loads of coals, but have also had the pleasure to excite general sympathy for my decayed circumstances among those who, if my revenue had continued to be spent among them, would have cared little if I had been hanged. Thus, while I drink my vin ordinaire, *my brewer finds the sale of his small beer diminished—while I discuss my flask of* cinq francs, *my modicum of port hangs on my wine-merchant's hands—while my* côtelette à-la-Maintenon *is smoking on my plate, the mighty sirloin hangs on its peg in the shop of my blue-aproned friend in the village. Whatever, in short, I spend here is missed at home; and the few sous gained by the* garçon perruquier, *nay, the very crust I give to his little bare-bottomed, red-eyed poodle, are* autant de perdu *to my old friend the barber, and honest Trusty, the mastiff dog in the yard. So that I*

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have the happiness of knowing at every turn that my absence is both missed and moaned by those who would care little were I in my coffin, were they sure of the custom of my executors. From this charge of self-seeking and indifference, however, I solemnly except Trusty, the yard-dog, whose courtesies towards me, I have reason to think, were of a more disinterested character than those of any other person who assisted me to consume the bounty of the Public.

Alas! the advantage of exciting such general sympathies at home cannot be secured without incurring considerable personal inconvenience. "If thou wishest me to weep, thou must first shed tears thyself," says Horace; and, truly, I could sometimes cry myself at the exchange I have made of the domestic comforts which custom had rendered necessaries, for the foreign substitutes which caprice and love of change had rendered fashionable. I cannot but confess with shame that my homebred stomach longs for the genuine steak, after the fashion of Dolly's, hot from the gridiron, brown without, and scarlet when the knife is applied; and that all the delicacies of Very's carte, *with his thousand various orthographies of* Biftecks de Mouton, *do not supply the vacancy. Then my mother's son cannot learn to delight in thin potations; and in these days when malt is had for nothing, I am convinced that a double* straick *of John Barleycorn must have converted "the poor domestic creature, small-beer," into a liquor twenty times more generous than the acid unsubstantial tipple, which here bears the honoured name of wine, though, in substance and qualities, much similar to your Seine water. Their higher wines, indeed, are well enough—there is nothing to except against in their Chateau Margot, or Sillery; yet I cannot but remember the generous qualities of my sound old Oporto. Nay, down to the* garçon *and his poodle, though they are both amusing animals, and play ten thousand monkey-tricks, which are diverting enough, yet there was more sound humour in the wink with which our village Packwood used to communicate the news of the morning, than all Antoine's gambols could have expressed in a week, and more of human and dog-like sympathy in the wag of old Trusty's tail, than if his rival Touton had stood on his hind-legs for a twelvemonth.*

These signs of repentance come perhaps a little late, and I own (for I must be entirely candid with my dear friend the Public) that they have been somewhat matured by the perversion of my niece Christy to the ancient Popish faith by a certain whacking priest in our neighbourhood, and the marriage of my aunt Dorothy to a demi-solde *captain of horse, a ci-devant member of the Legion of Honour, and*

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who would, he assures us, have been a Field-Marshal by this time had our old friend Bonaparte continued to live and to triumph. For the matter of Christy, I must own her head had been so fairly turned at Edinburgh with five routs a-night, that, though I somewhat distrusted the means and medium of her conversion, I was at the same time glad to see that she took a serious thought of any kind; —besides, there was little loss in the matter, for the Convent took her off my hands for a very reasonable pension. But aunt Dorothy's marriage on earth was a very different matter from Christian's celestial espousals. In the first place, there were two thousand three-per-cents as much lost to my family as if the sponge had been drawn over the national slate—for who the deuce could have thought aunt Dorothy would have married? Above all, who would have thought a woman of fifty years' experience would have married a French anatomy, his lower branch of limbs corresponding with the upper branch, as if one pair of half-extended compasses had been placed perpendicularly upon the top of another, while the space on which the hinges revolved quite sufficed to represent the body? All the rest was mustache, pelisse, and calico trowser. She might have commanded a Polk of real Cossacks in 1815 for half the wealth which she surrendered to this military scarecrow. However, there is no more to be said upon the matter, especially as she had come the length of quoting Rousseau for sentiment—and so let that pass.

Having thus expectorated my bile against a land, which is, notwithstanding, a very merry land, and which I cannot blame, because I sought it, and it did not seek me, I come to the more immediate purpose of this Introduction, and which, my dearest Public, if I do not reckon too much on the continuance of your favours (though, to say truth, consistency and uniformity of taste are scarce to be reckoned upon by those who court your good graces), may, perhaps, go far to make me amends for the loss and damage I have sustained by bringing aunt Dorothy to the country of thick calves, slender ankles, black mustaches, bodiless limbs (I assure you the fellow is, as my friend Lord L—— said, a complete giblet-pie, all legs and wings), and fine sentiments. If she had taken from the half-pay list a ranting Highlandman, ay, or a dashing son of Erin, I would never have mentioned the subject; but as the affair has happened, it is scarce possible not to resent such a gratuitous plundering of her own lawful heirs and executors. But "be hushed, my dark spirit!" and let us invite our dear Public to a more pleasing theme to us, a more interesting one to others.

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By dint of drinking acid tiff, as above mentioned, and smoking cigars, in which I am no novice, my Public are to be informed that I gradually sipp'd and smoked myself into a certain degree of acquaintance with un homme comme il faut, *one of the few fine old specimens of nobility who are still to be found in France; who, like mutilated statues of an antiquated and obsolete worship, still command a certain portion of awe and estimation in the eyes even of those by whom neither one nor other are voluntarily rendered.*

On visiting the coffee-house of the village, I was, at first, struck with the singular dignity and gravity of this gentleman's manners, his sedulous attachment to shoes and stockings, in contempt of half-boots and pantaloons, the croix de Saint Louis *at his button-hole, and a small white cockade in the loop of his old-fashioned shako. There was something interesting in his whole appearance; and besides, his gravity among the lively group around him, seemed, like the shade of a tree in the glare of a sunny landscape, more interesting from its rarity. I made such advances towards acquaintance as the circumstances of the place and the manners of the country authorised —that is to say, I drew near him, smoked my cigar by calm and intermitted puffs, which were scarcely visible, and asked him those few questions which good breeding everywhere, but more especially in France, permits strangers to put, without hazarding the imputation of impertinence. The Marquis de Hautlieu, for such was his rank, was as short and sententious as French politeness permitted—he answered every question, but proposed nothing, and encouraged no farther inquiry.*

The truth was, that, not very accessible to foreigners of any nation, or even to strangers among his own countrymen, the Marquis was peculiarly shy towards the English. A remnant of ancient national prejudice might dictate this feeling; or it might arise from his idea that they are a haughty, purse-proud people, to whom rank, united with straitened circumstances, affords as much subject for scorn as for pity; or, finally, when he reflected on certain recent events, he might perhaps feel mortified as a Frenchman, even for those successes which had restored his master to the throne, and himself to a diminished property and dilapidated chateau. *His dislike, however, never assumed a more active form than that of alienation from English society. When the affairs of strangers required the interposition of his influence in their behalf, it was uniformly granted with the courtesy of a French gentleman, who knew what is due to himself and to national hospitality.*

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At length, by some chance, the Marquis made the discovery, that the new frequenter of his ordinary was a native of Scotland, a circumstance which told mightily in my favour. Some of his own ancestors, he informed me, had been of Scottish origin, and he believed his house had still some relations in what he was pleased to call the province of Hanguisse, in that country. The connection had been acknowledged early in the last century on both sides, and he had once almost determined, during his exile (for it may be supposed that the Marquis had joined the ranks of Condé, and shared all the misfortunes and distresses of emigration), to claim the acquaintance and protection of his Scottish friends. But, after all, he said, he cared not to present himself before them in circumstances which could do them but small credit, and which they might think entailed some little burden, perhaps even some little disgrace; so that he thought it best to trust in Providence, and do the best he could for his own support. What that was I never could learn; but I am sure it inferred nothing which could be discreditable to the excellent old man, who held fast his opinions and his loyalty, through good and bad repute, till time restored him, aged, indigent, and broken-spirited, to the country which he had left in the prime of youth and health, and sobered by age into patience, instead of that tone of high resentment, which promised speedy vengeance upon those who expelled him. I might have laughed at some points of the Marquis's character, at his prejudices particularly, both of birth and politics, if I had known him under more prosperous circumstances; but, situated as he was, even if they had not been fair and honest prejudices, turning on no base or interested motive, one must have respected him as we respect the confessor or the martyr of a religion which is not entirely our own.

By degrees we became good friends, drank our coffee, smoked our cigar, and took our bavaroise *together, for more than six weeks, with little interruption from avocations on either side. Having, with some difficulty, got the key-note of his inquiries concerning Scotland, by a fortunate conjecture that the province d'Hanguisse could only be our shire of Angus, I was enabled to answer the most of his queries concerning his allies there in a manner more or less satisfactory, and was much surprised to find the Marquis much better acquainted with the genealogy of some of the distinguished families in that county, than I could possibly have expected.*

On his part, his satisfaction at our intercourse was so great, that he at length wound himself to such a pitch of resolution, as to invite me to dine at the Chateau de Hautlieu, well deserving the name, as

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occupying a commanding eminence on the banks of the Loire. This building lay about three miles from the town at which I had settled my temporary establishment; and when I first beheld it I could easily forgive the mortified feelings which the owner testified at receiving a guest in the asylum which he had formed out of the ruins of the palace of his fathers. He gradually, with much gaiety, which yet evidently covered a deeper feeling, prepared me for the sort of place I was about to visit; and for this he had full opportunity whilst he drove me in his little cabriolet, drawn by a large heavy Norman horse, towards the ancient building.

Its remains run along a beautiful terrace overhanging the river Loire, which had been formerly laid out with a succession of flights of steps, highly ornamented with statues, rock-work, and other artificial embellishments, descending from one terrace to another, until the very verge of the river was attained. All this architectural decoration, with its accompanying parterres of rich flowers and exotic shrubs, had, many years since, given place to the more profitable scene of the vine-dresser's labours; yet the remains, too massive to be destroyed, are still visible, and, with the various artificial slopes and levels of the high bank, bear perfect evidence how actively Art had been here employed to decorate Nature.

Few of these scenes are now left in perfection; for the fickleness of fashion has accomplished in England the total change which devastation and popular fury have produced in the French pleasure-grounds. For my part, I am contented to subscribe to the opinion of the best qualified judge of our time, who thinks we have carried to an extreme our taste for simplicity, and that the neighbourhood of a stately mansion requires some more ornate embellishments than can be derived from the meagre accompaniments of grass and gravel. A highly romantic situation may be degraded, perhaps, by an attempt at such artificial ornaments; but, then, in by far the greater number of sites, the intervention of more architectural decoration than is now in use, seems necessary to redeem the naked tameness of a large house, placed by itself in the midst of a lawn, where it looks as much unconnected with all around as if it had walked out of town upon an airing.*

How the taste came to change so suddenly and absolutely is rather a singular circumstance, unless we explain it on the same principle

* See Price's *Essay on the Picturesque*, in many passages; but I would particularise the beautiful and highly poetical account which he gives of his own feelings on destroying, at the dictate of an improver, an ancient sequestrated garden, with its yew hedges, ornamented iron gates, and secluded wilderness.

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on which the three friends of the Father in Molière's comedy recommend a cure for the melancholy of his daughter—that he should furnish her apartment, namely, with paintings—with tapestry—or with china, according to the different commodities in which each of them was a dealer.—Tried by this scale, we may perhaps discover that, of old, the architect laid out the garden and the pleasure-grounds in the neighbourhood of the mansion, and, naturally enough, displayed his own art there in statues and vases, and paved terraces and flights of steps, with ornamented balustrades; while the gardener, subordinate in rank, endeavoured to make the vegetable kingdom correspond to the prevailing taste, and cut his evergreens into verdant walls, with towers and battlements, and his detached trees into a resemblance of statuary. But the wheel has since revolved, so as to place the landscape gardener, as he is called, almost upon a level with the architect; and hence a liberal and somewhat violent use is made of spade and pick-axe, and a conversion of the ostentatious labours of the architect into a ferme ornée, *as little different from the simplicity of Nature, as displayed in the surrounding country, as the comforts of convenient and cleanly walks, imperiously demanded in the vicinage of a gentleman's residence, can possibly admit.*

To return from this digression, which has given the Marquis's cabriolet (its activity greatly retarded by the downward propensities of Jean Roast-Beef, which I suppose the Norman horse cursed as heartily as his countrymen of old time execrated the stolid obesity of a Saxon slave) time to ascend the hill by a winding causeway, now much broken, we came in sight of a long range of roofless buildings, connected with the western extremity of the castle, which was totally ruinous. "I should apologise," he said, "to you, as an Englishman, for the taste of my ancestors, in connecting that row of stables with the architecture of the chateau. I know in your country it is usual to remove them to some distance; but my family had an hereditary pride in horses, and were fond of visiting them more frequently than would have been convenient if they had been kept at a greater distance. Before the Revolution I had thirty fine horses in that ruinous line of buildings."

This recollection of past magnificence escaped from him accidentally, for he was generally sparing in alluding to his former opulence. It was quietly said, without any affectation either of the importance attached to early wealth, or as demanding sympathy for its having passed away. It awakened unpleasing reflections, however, and we were both silent, till, from a partially repaired corner of what had

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been a porter's lodge, a lively French paysanne, *with eyes as black as jet, and as brilliant as diamonds, came out with a smile, which showed a set of teeth that duchesses might have envied, and took the reins of the little carriage.*

"*Madelon must be groom to-day," said the Marquis, after graciously nodding in return for her deep reverence to Monsieur, "for her husband is gone to market; and for La Jeunesse, he is almost distracted with his various occupations.—Madelon," he continued, as we walked forward under the entrance-arch, crowned with the mutilated armorial bearings of former lords, now half-obscured by moss and rye-grass, not to mention the vagrant branches of some unpruned shrubs—"Madelon was my wife's god-daughter, and was educated to be fille-de-chambre to my daughter."*

This passing intimation that he was a widowed husband and childless father, increased my respect for the unfortunate nobleman, to whom every particular attached to his present situation brought, doubtless, its own share of food for melancholy reflection. He proceeded, after the pause of an instant, with something of a gayer tone —"You will be entertained with my poor La Jeunesse," he said, "who, by the way, is ten years older than I am"—(the Marquis is above sixty)—"he reminds me of the player in the Roman Comique *who acted a whole play in his own proper person—he insists on being maître d'hôtel, maître de cuisine, valet-de-chambre, a whole suite of attendants in his own poor individuality. He sometimes reminds me of a character in the* Bridle of Lammermore, *which you must have read, as it is the work of one of your* gens de lettres, qu'on appelle, je crois, le Chevalier Scott."*

"*I presume you mean Sir Walter?"*

"*Yes—the same—the same," answered the Marquis.*

We were now led away from more painful recollections; for I had to put my French friend right in two particulars. In the first I prevailed with difficulty; for the Marquis, though he disliked the English, yet, having been three months in London, piqued himself on understanding the most intricate difficulties of our language, and appealed to every dictionary, from Florio downwards, that la Bride *must mean the Bridle. Nay, so sceptical was he on this point of philology, that, when I ventured to hint that there was nothing about a bridle in the whole story, he, with great composure, and little know-*

* It is scarce necessary to remind the reader that this passage was published during the Author's incognito; and, as Lucio expresses it, spoken "according to the trick."

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ing to whom he spoke, laid the whole blame of that inconsistency on the unfortunate author. I had next the common candour to inform my friend, upon grounds which no one could know so well as myself, that my distinguished literary countryman, of whom I shall always speak with the respect his talents deserve, was not responsible for the slight works which the humour of the public had too generously, as well as too rashly, ascribed to him. Surprised by the impulse of the moment, I even might have gone farther, and clenched the negative by positive evidence, owning to my entertainer that no one else could possibly have written these works, since I myself was the author, when I was saved from so rash a commitment of myself by the calm reply of the Marquis, that he was glad to hear these sort of trifles were not written by a person of condition. "We read them," he said, "as we listen to the pleasantries of a comedian, or as our ancestors did to those of a professed family-jester, with a good deal of amusement, which, however, we should be sorry to derive from the mouth of one who has better claims to our society."

I was completely recalled to my constitutional caution by this declaration; and became so much afraid of committing myself, that I did not even venture to explain to my aristocratic friend, that the gentleman whom he had named owed his advancement, for aught I had ever heard, to certain works of his, which may, without injury, be compared to romances in rhyme.

The truth is, that, amongst some other unjust prejudices, at which I have already hinted, the Marquis had contracted a horror, mingled with contempt, for almost every species of author-craft slighter than that which compounds a folio volume of law or of divinity, and looked upon the author of a romance, novel, fugitive poem, or periodical piece of criticism, as men do on a venomous reptile, with fear at once and with loathing. The abuse of the press, he contended, especially in its lighter departments, had poisoned the whole morality of Europe, and was once more gradually regaining an influence which had been silenced amidst the voice of war. All writers, except those of the largest and heaviest calibre, he conceived to be devoted to this evil cause, from Rousseau and Voltaire down to Pigault le Brun and the author of the Scotch novels; and although he admitted he read them pour passer le temps, *yet, like Pistol eating his leek, it was not without execrating the tendency, as he devoured the story, of the work with which he was engaged.*

Observing this peculiarity, I backed out of the candid confession which my vanity had meditated, and engaged the Marquis in farther

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remarks on the mansion of his ancestors. "There," he said, "was the theatre where my father used to procure an order for the special attendance of some of the principal actors of the Comédie Françoise, when the King and Madame Pompadour more than once visited him at this place;—yonder, more to the centre, was the Baron's hall, where his feudal jurisdiction was exercised when criminals were to be tried by the Seigneur or his bailiff; for we had, like your old Scottish nobles, the right of pit and gallows, or fossa cum furca, *as the civilians term it;—beneath that lies the Question-chamber, or apartment for torture; and truly, I am sorry a right so liable to abuse should have been lodged in the hands of any living creature. But," he added, with a feeling of dignity derived even from the atrocities which his ancestors had committed beneath the grated windows to which he pointed, "such is the effect of superstition, that, to this day, the peasants dare not approach the dungeons, in which, it is said, the wrath of my ancestors had perpetrated, in former times, much cruelty." As we approached the window, while I expressed some curiosity to see this abode of terror, there arose from its subterranean abyss a shrill shout of laughter, which we easily detected as produced by a group of playful children, who had made the neglected vaults a theatre, for a joyous romp at Colin Maillard.*

The Marquis was somewhat disconcerted, and had recourse to his tabatière; *but, recovering in a moment, observed, these were Madelon's children, and familiar with the supposed terrors of the subterranean recesses. "Besides," he added, "to speak the truth, these poor children have been born after the period of supposed illumination, which dispelled our superstition and our religion at once; and this bids me to remind you, that this is a* jour maigre. *The* Curé *of the parish is my only guest, besides yourself, and I would not voluntarily offend his opinions. Besides," he continued, more manfully, and throwing off his restraint, "adversity has taught me other thoughts on these subjects than those which prosperity dictated; and I thank God I am not ashamed to avow, that I follow the observances of my church."*

I hastened to answer, that, though they might differ from those of my own, I had every possible respect for the religious rules of every Christian community, sensible that we addressed the same Deity, on the same grand principle of salvation, though with different forms; which variety of worship, had it pleased the Almighty not to permit, our observances would have been as distinctly prescribed to us as they are laid down under the Mosaic law.

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The Marquis was no shaker of hands, but upon the present occasion he grasped mine, and shook it kindly—the only mode of acquiescence in my sentiments which perhaps a zealous Catholic could, or ought consistently to have given upon such an occasion.

This circumstance of explanation and remark, with others which arose out of the view of the extensive ruins, occupied us during two or three turns upon the long terrace, and a seat of about a quarter of an hour's duration in a vaulted pavilion of freestone, decorated with the Marquis's armorial bearings, the roof of which, though disjointed in some of its groined arches, was still solid and entire. "Here," said he, resuming the tone of a former part of his conversation, "I love to sit, either at noon, when the alcove affords me shelter from the heat, or in the evening, when the sun's beams are dying on the broad face of the Loire—here, in the words of your great poet, whom, Frenchman as I am, I am more intimately acquainted with than most Englishmen, I love to rest myself,

'Showing the code of sweet and bitter fancy.'"

Against this various reading of a well-known passage in Shakespeare I took care to offer no protest; for I suspect Shakespeare would have suffered in the opinion of so delicate a judge as the Marquis, had I proved his having written "chewing the cud," according to all other authorities. Besides, I had had enough of our former dispute, having been long convinced (though not till ten years after I had left Edinburgh College), that the pith of conversation does not consist in exhibiting your own superior knowledge on matters of small consequence, but in enlarging, improving, and correcting the information you possess, by the authority of others. I therefore let the Marquis show *his* code *at his pleasure, and was rewarded by his entering into a learned and well-informed disquisition on the florid style of architecture introduced into France during the seventeenth century. He pointed out its merits and its defects with considerable taste; and having touched on topics similar to those upon which I have formerly digressed, he made an appeal of a different kind in their favour, founded on the associations with which they were combined. "Who," he said, "would willingly destroy the terraces of the Chateau of Sully, since we cannot tread them without recalling the image of that statesman, alike distinguished for severe integrity and for strong and unerring sagacity of mind? Were they an inch less broad, a ton's weight less massive, or were they deprived of their formality by the slightest inflections, could we suppose them to remain the scene of his*

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patriotic musings? Would an ordinary root-house be a fit scene for the Duke occupying an arm-chair, and his Duchess a tabouret—*teaching from thence lessons of courage and fidelity to his sons,—of modesty and submission to his daughters, of rigid morality to both; while the circle of young noblesse listened with ears attentive, and eyes modestly fixed on the ground in a standing posture, neither replying nor sitting down, without the express command of their prince and parent?—No, Monsieur," he said, with enthusiasm; "destroy the princely pavilion in which this edifying family-scene was represented, and you remove from the mind the vraisemblance, the veracity of the whole representation. Or can your mind suppose this distinguished peer and patriot walking in a* jardin Anglois? *Why, you might as well fancy him dressed with a blue frock and white waistcoat, instead of his Henri Quatre coat and* chapeau à-plumes—*Consider how he could have moved in the tortuous maze of what you have called a* ferme ornée, *with his usual attendants of two files of Swiss guards preceding, and the same number following him. To recall his figure, with his beard*—haut-de-chausses à canon, *united to his doublet by ten thousand* aiguilettes *and knots of ribbon, you could not, supposing him in a modern* jardin Anglois, *distinguish the picture in your imagination, from the sketch of some mad old man, who has adopted the humour of dressing like his great-great-grandfather, and whom a party of gens-d'armes were conducting to the* Hôpital des Fous. *But look on the long and magnificent terrace, if it yet exists, which the loyal and exalted Sully was wont to make the scene of his solitary walk twice a day, while he pondered over the patriotic schemes which he nourished for advancing the glory of France; or at a later, and more sorrowful period of life, brooded over the memory of his murdered master, and the fate of his distracted country;—throw in that noble background of arcades, vases, images, urns, and whatever could express the vicinity of a ducal palace, and the landscape becomes consistent at once. The* factionnaires, *with their harquebusses ported, placed at the extremities of the long and level walk, intimate the presence of the feudal prince; while the same is more clearly shown by the guard of honour which precede and follow him, their halberds carried upright, their mien martial and stately, as if in the presence of an enemy, yet moved, as it were, with the same soul as their princely superior—teaching their steps to attend upon his, marching as he marches, halting as he halts, accommodating their pace even to the slight irregularities of pause and advance dictated by the fluctuations of his reverie, and wheeling with military*

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precision before and behind him, who seems the centre and animating principle of their armed files, as the heart gives life and energy to the human body. Or, if you smile," added the Marquis, looking doubtfully on my countenance, "at a promenade so inconsistent with the light freedom of modern manners, could you bring your mind to demolish that other terrace trod by the fascinating Marchioness de Sevigné, with which are united so many recollections connected with passages in her enchanting letters?"

A little tired of this disquisition, which the Marquis certainly dwelt upon to exalt the natural beauties of his own terrace, which, dilapidated as it was, required no such formal recommendation, I informed my companion, that I had just received from England a journal of a tour made in the South of France by a young Oxonian friend of mine, a poet, a draughtsman, and a scholar—in which he gives such an animated and interesting description of the Chateau-Grignan, the dwelling of Madame de Sevigné's beloved daughter, and frequently the place of her own residence, that no one who ever read the book would be within forty miles of the same without going a pilgrimage to the spot. The Marquis smiled, seemed very much pleased, and asked the title at length of the work in question; and writing down to my dictation, "An Itinerary of Provence and the Rhone, made during the year 1819; by John Hughes, A.M., of Oriel College, Oxford," observed, he could now purchase no books for the Chateau, but would recommend that the Itinéraire should be commissioned for the library to which he was* abonné *in the neighbouring town. "And here," he said, "comes the Curé to save us farther disquisition; and I see La Jeunesse gliding round the old portico on the terrace, with the purpose of ringing the dinner-bell—a most unnecessary ceremony for assembling three persons, but which it would break the old man's heart to forego. Take no notice of him at present, as he wishes to perform the duties of the inferior departments incognito; when the bell has ceased to sound, he will blaze forth on us in the character of major-domo."*

As the Marquis spoke we had advanced towards the eastern extre-

* [This Journal, or "Itinerary," with etchings by the author, was published at London, 1822, 8vo, and was followed by a volume in folio, entitled *Views in the South of France, chiefly on the Rhone*, engraved by W. D. Cooke, etc., from drawings by P. Dewint, after original sketches by John Hughes, Lond. 1825.

Mr. Lockhart, in his "Life of Scott," has, by some oversight, connected the late Mr. Skene's name with "Quentin Durward" instead of with "Anne of Geierstein." There is good authority for correcting this.]

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mity of the Chateau, which was the only part of the edifice that remained still habitable.

"*The* Bande Noire," *said the Marquis,* "*when they pulled the rest of the house to pieces, for the sake of the lead, timber, and other materials, have, in their ravages, done me the undesigned favour to reduce it to dimensions better fitting the circumstances of the owner. There is enough of the leaf left for the caterpillar to coil up his chrysalis in, and what needs he care though reptiles have devoured the rest of the bush?*"

As he spoke thus we reached the door, at which La Jeunesse appeared, with an air at once of prompt service and deep respect, and a countenance which, though puckered by a thousand wrinkles, was ready to answer the first good-natured word of his master with a smile, which showed his white set of teeth, firm and fair in despite of age and suffering. His clean silk stockings, washed till their tint had become yellowish—his cue tied with a rosette—the thin grey curl on either side of his lank cheek—the pearl-coloured coat without a collar—the solitaire, the jabot, *the ruffles at the wrist, and the* chapeau-bras—*all announced that La Jeunesse considered the arrival of a guest at the Chateau as an unusual event, which was to be met with a corresponding display of magnificence and parade on his part.*

As I looked at the faithful though fantastic follower of his master, who doubtless inherited his prejudices as well as his cast-clothes, I could not but own, in my own mind, the resemblance pointed out by the Marquis betwixt him and my own Caleb, the trusty squire of the Master of Ravenswood. But a Frenchman, a Jack-of-all-trades by nature, can, with much more ease and suppleness, address himself to a variety of services, and suffice in his own person to discharge them all, than is possible for the formality and slowness of a Scotchman. Superior to Caleb in dexterity, though not in zeal, La Jeunesse seemed to multiply himself with the necessities of the occasion, and discharged his several tasks with such promptitude and assiduity, that farther attendance than his was neither missed nor wished for.

The dinner, in particular, was exquisite. The soup, although bearing the term of maigre, *which Englishmen use in scorn, was most delicately flavoured, and the matelot of pike and eels reconciled me, though a Scotsman, to the latter. There was even a petit plat of* bouilli *for the heretic, so exquisitely dressed as to retain all the juices, and, at the same time, rendered so thoroughly tender, that nothing could be more delicate. The* potage, *with another small dish or two, were equally well arranged. But what the old maître d'hôtel*

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valued himself upon as something superb, smiling with self-satisfaction, and in enjoyment of my surprise, as he placed it on the table, was an immense assiette *of spinage, not smoothed into a uniform surface, as by our uninaugurated cooks upon your side of the water, but swelling into hills, and declining into vales, over which swept a gallant stag, pursued by a pack of hounds in full cry, and a noble field of horsemen with bugle-horns, and whips held upright, and brandished after the manner of broadswords—hounds, huntsmen, and stag, being all very artificially cut out of toasted bread. Enjoying the praises which I failed not to bestow on this* chef d'œuvre, *the old man acknowledged it had cost the best part of two days to bring it to perfection; and added, giving honour where honour was due, that an idea so brilliant was not entirely his own, but that Monsieur himself had taken the trouble to give him several valuable hints, and even condescended to assist in the execution of some of the most capital figures. The Marquis blushed a little at this éclaircissement, which he might probably have wished to suppress, but acknowledged he had wished to surprise me with a scene from the popular poem of my country, Miladi Lac. I answered, that so splendid a cortège much more resembled a grand chasse of Louis Quatorze than of a poor King of Scotland, and that the* paysage *was rather like Fountainbleau than the wilds of Callander. He bowed graciously in answer to this compliment, and acknowledged that recollections of the costume of the old French Court, when in its splendour, might have misled his imagination—and so the conversation passed on to other matters.*

Our dessert was exquisite—the cheese, the fruits, the salad, the olives, the cerneaux, *and the delicious white wine, each in their way were* impayables; *and the good Marquis, with an air of great satisfaction, observed that his guest did sincere homage to their merits. "After all," he said, "and yet it is but confessing a foolish weakness—but, after all, I cannot but rejoice in feeling myself equal to offering a stranger a sort of hospitality which seems pleasing to him. Believe me, it is not entirely out of pride that we* pauvres revenants *live so very retired, and avoid the duties of hospitality. It is true, that too many of us wander about the halls of our fathers rather like ghosts of their deceased proprietors than like living men restored to their own possessions—yet it is rather on your account, than to spare our own feelings, that we do not cultivate the society of our foreign visitors. We have an idea that your opulent nation is particularly attached to* faste *and to* grand chère—*to your ease and enjoyment*

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of every kind; and the means of entertainment left to us are, in most cases, so limited, that we feel ourselves totally precluded from such expense and ostentation. No one wishes to offer his best where he has reason to think it will not give pleasure; and, as many of you publish your journals, Monsieur le Marquis would not probably be much gratified by seeing the poor dinner which he was able to present to Milord Anglois put upon permanent record."

I interrupted the Marquis, that, were I to wish an account of my entertainment published, it would be only in order to preserve the memory of the very best dinner I ever had eaten in my life. He bowed in return, and presumed "that I either differed much from the national taste, or the accounts of it were greatly exaggerated. He was particularly obliged to me for showing the value of the possessions which remained to him. "The useful," he said, "had no doubt survived the sumptuous at Hautlieu as elsewhere. Grottoes, statues, curious conservatories of exotics, temple and tower, had gone to the ground; but the vineyard, the potager, *the orchard, the* étang, *still existed; and once more he expressed himself happy to find that their combined productions could make what even a Briton accepted as a tolerable meal. I only hope," he continued, "that you will convince me your compliments are sincere, by accepting the hospitality of the Chateau de Hautlieu as often as better engagements will permit during your stay in this neighbourhood."*

I readily promised to accept an invitation offered with such grace, as to make the guest appear the person conferring the obligation.

The conversation then changed to the history of the Chateau and its vicinity—a subject which was strong ground to the Marquis, though he was no great antiquary, and even no very profound historian, when other topics were discussed. The Curé, however, chanced to be both, and withal a very conversable pleasing man, with an air of prévenance, *and ready civility of communication, which I have found a leading characteristic of the Catholic clergy, whether they are well-informed or otherwise. It was from him that I learned there still existed the remnant of a fine library in the Chateau de Hautlieu. The Marquis shrugged his shoulders as the Curé gave me this intimation, looked to the one side and the other, and displayed the same sort of petty embarrassment which he had been unable to suppress when La Jeunesse blabbed something of his interference with the arrangements of the* cuisine. *"I should be happy to show the books," he said, "but they are in such a wild condition, so dismantled, that I am ashamed to exhibit them to any one."*

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"Forgive me, my dear sir," said the Curé, "you know you permitted the great English Bibliomaniac, Dr. Dibdin, to consult your curious reliques, and you know how highly he spoke of them."

"What could I do, my dear friend?" said the Marquis; "the good Doctor had heard some exaggerated account of these remnants of what was once a library—he had stationed himself in the auberge *below, determined to carry his point or die under the walls. I even heard of his taking the altitude of the turret, in order to provide scaling-ladders. You would not have had me reduce a respectable divine, though of another church, to such an act of desperation? I could not have answered it in conscience."*

"But you know, besides, Monsieur le Marquis," continued the Curé, "that Dr. Dibdin was so much grieved at the dilapidation your library had sustained, that he avowedly envied the powers of our church, so much did he long to launch an anathema at the heads of the perpetrators."

"His resentment was in proportion to his disappointment, I suppose," said our entertainer.

"Not so," said the Curé; "for he was so enthusiastic on the value of what remains, that I am convinced nothing but your positive request to the contrary prevented the Chateau of Hautlieu occupying at least twenty pages in that splendid work of which he sent us a copy, and which will remain a lasting monument of his zeal and erudition."

"Dr. Dibdin is extremely polite," said the Marquis; "and when we have had our coffee—here it comes—we will go to the turret; and I hope, as Monsieur has not despised my poor fare, so he will pardon the state of my confused library, while I shall be equally happy if it can afford anything which can give him amusement. Indeed," he added, "were it otherwise, you, my good father, have every right over books, which, without your intervention, would never have returned to the owner."

Although this additional act of courtesy was evidently wrested by the importunity of the Curé from his reluctant friend, whose desire to conceal the nakedness of the land, and the extent of his losses, seemed always to struggle with his disposition to be obliging, I could not help accepting an offer, which, in strict politeness, I ought perhaps to have refused. But then the remains of a collection of such curiosity as had given to our bibliomaniacal friend the desire of leading the forlorn hope in an escalade—it would have been a desperate act of self-denial to have declined an opportunity of seeing. La Jeunesse brought

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coffee, such as we only taste on the Continent, upon a salver, covered with a napkin, that it might be censé *for silver; and* chasse-caffé *from Martinique, on a small waiter, which was certainly so. Our repast thus finished, the Marquis led me up an* escalier dérobé, *into a very large and well-proportioned saloon, of nearly one hundred feet in length; but so waste and dilapidated, that I kept my eyes on the ground, lest my kind entertainer should feel himself called upon to apologise for tattered pictures and torn tapestry; and, worse than both, for casements that had yielded, in one or two instances, to the boisterous blast.*

"We have contrived to make the turret something more habitable," said the Marquis, as he moved hastily through this chamber of desolation. "This," he said, "was the picture gallery in former times, and in the boudoir beyond, which we now occupy as a book-closet, were preserved some curious cabinet paintings, whose small size required that they should be viewed closely."

As he spoke, he held aside a portion of the tapestry I have mentioned, and we entered the room of which he spoke.

It was octangular, corresponding to the external shape of the turret whose interior it occupied. Four of the sides had latticed windows, commanding each, from a different point, the most beautiful prospect over the majestic Loire, and the adjacent country through which it winded; and the casements were filled with stained glass, through two of which streamed the lustre of the setting sun, showing a brilliant assemblage of religious emblems and armorial bearings, which it was scarcely possible to look at with an undazzled eye; but the other two windows, from which the sun-beams had passed away, could be closely examined, and plainly showed that the lattices were glazed with stained glass, which did not belong to them originally, but, as I afterwards learned, to the profaned and desecrated chapel of the Castle. It had been the amusement of the Marquis, for several months, to accomplish this rifacciamento, *with the assistance of the Curate and the all-capable La Jeunesse; and though they had only patched together fragments, which were in many places very minute, yet the stained glass, till examined very closely, and with the eye of an antiquary, produced, on the whole, a very pleasing effect.*

The sides of the apartment, not occupied by the lattices, were (except the space for the small door) fitted up with presses and shelves, some of walnut-tree, curiously carved, and brought to a dark colour by time, nearly resembling that of a ripe chestnut, and partly of common deal. employed to repair and supply the deficiencies occasioned by violence

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and devastation. On these shelves were deposited the wrecks, or rather the precious relics, of a most splendid library.

The Marquis's father had been a man of information, and his grandfather was famous even in the Court of Louis XIV., where literature was in some degree considered as the fashion, for the extent of his acquirements. Those two proprietors, opulent in their fortunes, and liberal in the indulgence of their taste, had made such additions to a curious old Gothic library, which had descended from their ancestors, that there were few collections in France which could be compared to that of Hautlieu. It had been completely dispersed, in consequence of an ill-judged attempt of the present Marquis, in 1790, to defend his Chateau against a revolutionary mob. Luckily, the Curé, who, by his charitable and moderate conduct, and his evangelical virtues, possessed much interest among the neighbouring peasantry, prevailed on many of them to buy, for the petty sum of a few sous, and sometimes at the vulgar rate of a glass of brandy, volumes which had cost large sums, but which were carried off in mere spite by the ruffians who pillaged the castle. He himself also had purchased as many of the books as his funds could possibly reach, and to his care it was owing that they were restored to the turret in which I found them. It was no wonder, therefore, that the good Curé had some pride and pleasure in showing the collection to strangers.

In spite of odd volumes, imperfections, and all the other mortifications which an amateur encounters in looking through an ill-kept library, there were many articles in that of Hautlieu, calculated, as Bayes says, "to elevate and surprise" the bibliomaniac. There were

"The small rare volume, dark with tarnish'd gold,"

as Dr. Ferrier feelingly sings—curious and richly painted missals, manuscripts of 1380, 1320, and even earlier, and works in Gothic type, printed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But of these I intend to give a more detailed account should the Marquis grant his permission.

In the meantime, it is sufficient to say, that, delighted with the day I had spent at Hautlieu, I frequently repeated my visit, and that the key of the octangular tower was always at my command. In those hours I became deeply enamoured of a part of French history, which, although most important to that of Europe at large, and illustrated by an inimitable old historian, I had never sufficiently studied. At the same time, to gratify the feelings of my excellent host, I occu-

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pied myself occasionally with some family memorials, which had fortunately been preserved, and which contained some curious particulars respecting the connection with Scotland, which first found me favour in the eyes of the Marquis de Hautlieu.

I pondered on these things, more meo, *until my return to Britain, to beef and sea-coal fires, a change of residence which took place since I drew up these Gallic reminiscences. At length, the result of my meditations took the form of which my readers, if not startled by this preface, will presently be enabled to judge. Should the Public receive it with favour, I shall not regret having been for a short time an Absentee.*

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Look here upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.

HAMLET.

THE latter part of the fifteenth century prepared a train of future events, that ended by raising France to that state of formidable power, which has ever since been, from time to time, the principal object of jealousy to the other European nations. Before that period, she had to struggle for her very existence with the English, already possessed of her fairest provinces; while the utmost exertions of her King, and the gallantry of her people, could scarcely protect the remainder from a foreign yoke. Nor was this her sole danger. The princes who possessed the grand fiefs of the crown, and, in particular, the Dukes of Burgundy and Bretagne, had come to wear their feudal bonds so lightly, that they had no scruple in lifting the standard against their liege and sovereign lord, the King of France, on the slightest pretence. When at peace, they reigned as absolute princes in their own provinces; and the

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House of Burgundy, possessed of the district so called, together with the fairest and richest part of Flanders, was itself so wealthy, and so powerful, as to yield nothing to the crown, either in splendour or in strength.

In imitation of the grand feudatories, each inferior vassal of the crown assumed as much independence as his distance from the sovereign power, the extent of his fief, or the strength of his chateau, enabled him to maintain; and these petty tyrants, no longer amenable to the exercise of the law, perpetrated with impunity the wildest excesses of fantastic oppression and cruelty. In Auvergne alone, a report was made of more than three hundred of these independent nobles, to whom incest, murder, and rapine, were the most ordinary and familiar actions.

Besides these evils, another, springing out of the long-continued wars betwixt the French and English, added no small misery to this distracted kingdom. Numerous bodies of soldiers, collected into bands, under officers chosen by themselves, from among the bravest and most successful adventurers, had been formed in various parts of France out of the refuse of all other countries. These hireling combatants sold their swords for a time to the best bidder; and, when such service was not to be had, they made war on their own account, seizing castles and towers, which they used as the places of their retreat,—making prisoners, and ransoming them,—exacting tribute from the open villages, and the country around them,—and acquiring, by every species of rapine, the appropriate epithets of *Tondeurs* and *Ecorcheurs*, that is, *Clippers* and *Flayers*.

In the midst of the horrors and miseries arising from so distracted a state of public affairs, reckless and profuse expense distinguished the courts of the lesser nobles, as well as of the superior princes; and their dependants, in imitation, expended in rude, but magnificent display, the wealth which they extorted from the people. A tone of romantic and chivalrous gallantry (which, however, was often disgraced by unbounded license) characterised the intercourse between the sexes; and the language of knight-errantry was yet used, and its observances followed, though the pure spirit of honourable love, and benevolent enterprise, which it inculcates, had ceased to qualify and atone for its extravagances. The jousts and tournaments,

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the entertainments and revels, which each petty court displayed, invited to France every wandering adventurer; and it was seldom that, when arrived there, he failed to employ his rash courage, and headlong spirit of enterprise, in actions for which his happier native country afforded no free stage.

At this period, and as if to save this fair realm from the various woes with which it was menaced, the tottering throne was ascended by Louis XI., whose character, evil as it was in itself, met, combated, and in a great degree neutralised, the mischiefs of the time—as poisons of opposing qualities are said, in ancient books of medicine, to have the power of counteracting each other.

Brave enough for every useful and political purpose, Louis had not a spark of that romantic valour, or of the pride generally associated with it, which fought on for the point of honour, when the point of utility had been long gained. Calm, crafty, and profoundly attentive to his own interest, he made every sacrifice, both of pride and passion, which could interfere with it. He was careful in disguising his real sentiments and purposes from all who approached him, and frequently used the expressions, "that the King knew not how to reign, who knew not how to dissemble; and that, for himself, if he thought his very cap knew his secrets, he would throw it into the fire." No man of his own, or of any other time, better understood how to avail himself of the frailties of others, and when to avoid giving any advantage by the untimely indulgence of his own.

He was by nature vindictive and cruel, even to the extent of finding pleasure in the frequent executions which he commanded. But, as no touch of mercy ever induced him to spare, when he could with safety condemn, so no sentiment of vengeance ever stimulated him to a premature violence. He seldom sprung on his prey till it was fairly within his grasp, and till all hope of rescue was vain; and his movements were so studiously disguised, that his success was generally what first announced to the world the object he had been manœuvring to attain.

In like manner, the avarice of Louis gave way to apparent profusion, when it was necessary to bribe the favourite or minister of a rival prince for averting any impending attack, or to break up any alliance confederated against him. He was

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fond of license and pleasure; but neither beauty nor the chase, though both were ruling passions, ever withdrew him from the most regular attendance to public business and the affairs of his kingdom. His knowledge of mankind was profound, and he had sought it in the private walks of life, in which he often personally mingled; and, though naturally proud and haughty, he hesitated not, with an inattention to the arbitrary divisions of society which was then thought something portentously unnatural, to raise from the lowest rank men whom he employed on the most important duties, and knew so well how to choose them, that he was rarely disappointed in their qualities.

Yet there were contradictions in the character of this artful and able monarch; for human nature is rarely uniform. Himself the most false and insincere of mankind, some of the greatest errors of his life arose from too rash a confidence in the honour and integrity of others. When these errors took place, they seem to have arisen from an over-refined system of policy, which induced Louis to assume the appearance of undoubting confidence in those whom it was his object to overreach; for, in his general conduct, he was as jealous and suspicious as any tyrant who ever breathed.

Two other points may be noticed, to complete the sketch of this formidable character, by which he rose among the rude chivalrous sovereigns of the period to the rank of a keeper among wild beasts, who, by superior wisdom and policy, by distribution of food, and some discipline by blows, comes finally to predominate over those, who, if unsubjected by his arts, would by main strength have torn him to pieces.

The first of these attributes was Louis's excessive superstition, a plague with which Heaven often afflicts those who refuse to listen to the dictates of religion. The remorse arising from his evil actions Louis never endeavoured to appease by any relaxation in his Machiavellian stratagems, but laboured, in vain, to soothe and silence that painful feeling by superstitious observances, severe penance, and profuse gifts to the ecclesiastics. The second property, with which the first is sometimes found strangely united, was a disposition to low pleasures and obscure debauchery. The wisest, or at least the most crafty Sovereign of his time, he was fond of low life, and, being himself a man of wit, enjoyed the jests and repartees of social conversation more than could have been expected from other points of his

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character. He even mingled in the comic adventures of obscure intrigue, with a freedom little consistent with the habitual and guarded jealousy of his character, and he was so fond of this species of humble gallantry, that he caused a number of its gay and licentious anecdotes to be enrolled in a collection well known to book-collectors, in whose eyes (and the work is unfit for any other) the *right* edition is very precious.*

By means of this monarch's powerful and prudent, though most unamiable character, it pleased Heaven, who works by the tempest as well as by the soft small rain, to restore to the great French nation the benefits of civil government, which, at the time of his accession, they had nearly lost.

Ere he had succeeded to the crown, Louis had given evidence of his vices rather than of his talents. His first wife, Margaret of Scotland, was "done to death by slanderous tongues" in her husband's Court, where, but for the encouragement of Louis himself, not a word would have been breathed against that amiable and injured princess. He had been an ungrateful and a rebellious son, at one time conspiring to seize his father's person, and at another, levying open war against him. For the first offence, he was banished to his appanage of Dauphiné, which he governed with much sagacity—for the second he was driven into absolute exile, and forced to throw himself on the mercy, and almost on the charity, of the Duke of Burgundy and his son, where he enjoyed hospitality, afterwards indifferently requited, until the death of his father in 1461.

In the very outset of his reign, Louis was almost overpowered by a league formed against him by the great vassals of France, with the Duke of Burgundy, or rather his son, the Count de Charalois, at its head. They levied a powerful army, blockaded Paris, fought a battle of doubtful issue under its very walls, and placed the French monarchy on the brink of actual destruction. It usually happens in such cases, that the more sagacious general of the two gains the real fruit, though perhaps not the martial fame, of the disputed field. Louis, who had shown great personal bravery during the battle of Montl'héry, was able, by his

* This *editio princeps*, which, when in good preservation, is much sought after by connoisseurs, is entitled, *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles, contenant Cent Histoires Nouveaux, qui sont moult plaisans à raconter en toutes bonnes compagnies par manière de joyeuxeté. Paris, Antoine Verard. Sans date d'année d'impression; en folio gotique.*—See De Bure. See note, p. 156.

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prudence, to avail himself of its undecided character, as if it had been a victory on his side. He temporised until the enemy had broken up their leaguer, and showed so much dexterity in sowing jealousies among those great powers, that their alliance "for the public weal," as they termed it, but, in reality, for the overthrow of all but the external appearance of the French monarchy, dissolved itself, and was never again renewed in a manner so formidable. From this period, Louis, relieved of all danger from England, by the Civil wars of York and Lancaster, was engaged for several years, like an unfeeling but able physician, in curing the wounds of the body politic, or rather in stopping, now by gentle remedies, now by the use of fire and steel, the progress of those mortal gangrenes with which it was then infected. The *brigandage* of the Free Companies, and the unpunished oppressions of the nobility, he laboured to lessen, since he could not actually stop them; and, by dint of unrelaxed attention, he gradually gained some addition to his own regal authority, or effected some diminution of those by whom it was counterbalanced.

Still the King of France was surrounded by doubt and danger. The members of the league "for the public weal," though not in unison, were in existence, and, like a scotched snake, might reunite and become dangerous again. But a worse danger was the increasing power of the Duke of Burgundy, then one of the greatest Princes of Europe, and little diminished in rank by the very slight dependence of his duchy upon the crown of France.

Charles, surnamed the Bold, or rather the Audacious, for his courage was allied to rashness and frenzy, then wore the ducal coronet of Burgundy, which he burned to convert into a royal and independent regal crown. The character of this Duke was in every respect the direct contrast to that of Louis XI.

The latter was calm, deliberate, and crafty, never prosecuting a desperate enterprise, and never abandoning one likely to be successful, however distant the prospect. The genius of the Duke was entirely different. He rushed on danger because he loved it, and on difficulties because he despised them. As Louis never sacrificed his interest to his passion, so Charles, on the other hand, never sacrificed his passion, or even his humour, to any other consideration. Notwithstanding the near relationship that existed between them, and the support which the Duke

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and his father had afforded to Louis in his exile when Dauphin, there was mutual contempt and hatred betwixt them. The Duke of Burgundy despised the cautious policy of the King, and imputed to the faintness of his courage, that he sought by leagues, purchases, and other indirect means, those advantages, which, in his place, the Duke would have snatched with an armed hand. He likewise hated the King, not only for the ingratitude he had manifested for former kindnesses, and for personal injuries and imputations which the ambassadors of Louis had cast upon him, when his father was yet alive, but also, and especially, because of the support which he afforded in secret to the discontented citizens of Ghent, Liege, and other great towns in Flanders. These turbulent cities, jealous of their privileges, and proud of their wealth, were frequently in a state of insurrection against their liege lords the Dukes of Burgundy, and never failed to find underhand countenance at the Court of Louis, who embraced every opportunity of fomenting disturbance within the dominions of his overgrown vassal.

The contempt and hatred of the Duke were retaliated by Louis with equal energy, though he used a thicker veil to conceal his sentiments. It was impossible for a man of his profound sagacity not to despise the stubborn obstinacy which never resigned its purpose, however fatal perseverance might prove, and the headlong impetuosity, which commenced its career without allowing a moment's consideration for the obstacles to be encountered. Yet the King hated Charles even more than he contemned him, and his scorn and hatred were the more intense, that they were mingled with fear; for he knew that the onset of the mad bull, to whom he likened the Duke of Burgundy, must ever be formidable, though the animal makes it with shut eyes. It was not alone the wealth of the Burgundian provinces, the discipline of the warlike inhabitants, and the mass of their crowded population, which the King dreaded, for the personal qualities of their leader had also much in them that was dangerous. The very soul of bravery, which he pushed to the verge of rashness, and beyond it—profuse in expenditure—splendid in his court, his person, and his retinue, in all which he displayed the hereditary magnificence of the house of Burgundy, Charles the Bold drew into his service almost all the fiery spirits of the age whose tempers were congenial; and Louis saw too clearly what might be attempted and executed by such a train of resolute adven-

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turers, following a leader of a character as ungovernable as their own.

There was yet another circumstance which increased the animosity of Louis towards his overgrown vassal; he owed him favours which he never meant to repay, and was under the frequent necessity of temporising with him, and even of enduring bursts of petulant insolence, injurious to the regal dignity, without being able to treat him otherwise than as his "fair cousin of Burgundy."

It was about the year 1468, when their feuds were at the highest, though a dubious and hollow truce, as frequently happened, existed for the time betwixt them, that the present narrative opens. The person first introduced on the stage will be found indeed to be of a rank and condition, the illustration of whose character scarcely called for a dissertation on the relative position of two great princes; but the passions of the great, their quarrels, and their reconciliations, involve the fortunes of all who approach them; and it will be found, on proceeding farther in our story, that this preliminary Chapter is necessary for comprehending the history of the individual whose adventures we are about to relate.

CHAPTER SECOND.

THE WANDERER.

Why then the world is my oyster, which I with sword will open.
ANCIENT PISTOL.

IT was upon a delicious summer morning, before the sun had assumed its scorching power, and while the dews yet cooled and perfumed the air, that a youth, coming from the north-eastward, approached the ford of a small river, or rather a large brook, tributary to the Cher, near to the royal Castle of Plessis-les-Tours, whose dark and multiplied battlements rose in the background over the extensive forest with which they were surrounded. These woodlands comprised a noble chase, or royal park, fenced by an enclosure, termed, in the Latin of the middle ages, *Plexitium*, which gives the name of Plessis to so many

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villages in France. The castle and village of which we particularly speak, was called Plessis-les-Tours, to distinguish it from others, and was built about two miles to the southward of the fair town of that name, the capital of ancient Touraine, whose rich plain has been termed the Garden of France.

On the bank of the above-mentioned brook, opposite to that which the traveller was approaching, two men, who appeared in deep conversation, seemed, from time to time, to watch his motions; for, as their station was much more elevated, they could remark him at a considerable distance.

The age of the young traveller might be about nineteen, or betwixt that and twenty; and his face and person, which were very prepossessing, did not, however, belong to the country in which he was now a sojourner. His short grey cloak and hose were rather of Flemish than of French fashion, while the smart blue bonnet, with a single sprig of holly and an eagle's feather, was already recognised as the Scottish head-gear. His dress was very neat, and arranged with the precision of a youth conscious of possessing a fine person. He had at his back a satchel, which seemed to contain a few necessaries, a hawking gauntlet on his left hand, though he carried no bird, and in his right a stout hunter's pole. Over his left shoulder hung an embroidered scarf which sustained a small pouch of scarlet velvet, such as was then used by fowlers of distinction to carry their hawks' food, and other matters belonging to that much-admired sport. This was crossed by another shoulder-belt, to which was hung a hunting-knife, or couteau de chasse. Instead of the boots of the period, he wore buskins of half-dressed deer's-skin.

Although his form had not yet attained its full strength, he was tall and active, and the lightness of the step with which he advanced, showed that his pedestrian mode of travelling was pleasure rather than pain to him. His complexion was fair, in spite of a general shade of darker hue, with which the foreign sun, or perhaps constant exposure to the atmosphere in his own country, had, in some degree, embrowned it.

His features, without being quite regular, were frank, open, and pleasing. A half smile, which seemed to arise from a happy exuberance of animal spirits, showed, now and then, that his teeth were well set, and as pure as ivory; whilst his bright blue eye, with a corresponding gaiety, had an appropriate glance

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for every object which it encountered, expressing good-humour, lightness of heart, and determined resolution.

He received and returned the salutation of the few travellers who frequented the road in those dangerous times with the action which suited each. The strolling spearman, half soldier, half brigand, measured the youth with his eye, as if balancing the prospect of booty with the chance of desperate resistance; and read such indications of the latter in the fearless glance of the passenger, that he changed his ruffian purpose for a surly "Good-morrow, comrade," which the young Scot answered with as martial, though a less sullen tone. The wandering pilgrim, or the begging friar, answered his reverent greeting with a paternal benedicite; and the dark-eyed peasant girl looked after him for many a step after they had passed each other, and interchanged a laughing good-morrow. In short, there was an attraction about his whole appearance not easily escaping attention, and which was derived from the combination of fearless frankness and good-humour, with sprightly looks, and a handsome face and person. It seemed, too, as if his whole demeanour bespoke one who was entering on life with no apprehension of the evils with which it is beset, and small means for struggling with its hardships, except a lively spirit and a courageous disposition; and it is with such tempers that youth most readily sympathises, and for whom chiefly age and experience feel affectionate and pitying interest.

The youth whom we have described had been long visible to the two persons who loitered on the opposite side of the small river which divided him from the park and the castle; but as he descended the rugged bank to the water's edge, with the light step of a roe which visits the fountain, the younger of the two said to the other, "It is our man—it is the Bohemian! If he attempts to cross the ford, he is a lost man—the water is up, and the ford impassable."

"Let him make that discovery himself, gossip," said the elder personage; "it may, perchance, save a rope, and break a proverb."

"I judge him by the blue cap," said the other, "for I cannot see his face.—Hark, sir—he hallooes to know whether the water be deep."

"Nothing like experience in this world," answered the other —"let him try."

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The young man, in the meanwhile, receiving no hint to the contrary, and taking the silence of those to whom he applied as an encouragement to proceed, entered the stream without farther hesitation than the delay necessary to take off his buskins. The elder person, at the same moment, hallooed to him to beware, adding, in a lower tone, to his companion, "*Mortdieu*—gossip—you have made another mistake—this is not the Bohemian chatterer."

But the intimation to the youth came too late. He either did not hear or could not profit by it, being already in the deep stream. To one less alert, and practised in the exercise of swimming, death had been certain, for the brook was both deep and strong.

"By Saint Anne! but he is a proper youth," said the elder man—"Run, gossip, and help your blunder, by giving him aid, if thou canst. He belongs to thine own troop—if old saws speak truth, water will not drown him."

Indeed, the young traveller swam so strongly, and buffeted the waves so well, that, notwithstanding the strength of the current, he was carried but a little way down from the ordinary landing-place.

By this time the younger of the two strangers was hurrying down to the shore to render assistance, while the other followed him at a graver pace, saying to himself as he approached, "I knew water would never drown that young fellow.—By my halidome, he is ashore, and grasps his pole!—If I make not the more haste, he will beat my gossip for the only charitable action which I ever saw him perform, or attempt to perform, in the whole course of his life."

There was some reason to augur such a conclusion of the adventure, for the bonny Scot had already accosted the younger Samaritan, who was hastening to his assistance, with these ireful words—"Discourteous dog! why did you not answer when I called to know if the passage was fit to be attempted? May the foul fiend catch me, but I will teach you the respect due to strangers on the next occasion."

This was accompanied with that significant flourish with his pole which is called *le moulinet*, because the artist, holding it in the middle, brandished the two ends in every direction, like the sails of a windmill in motion. His opponent, seeing himself thus menaced, laid hand upon his sword, for he was one of

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those who on all occasions are more ready for action than for speech; but his more considerate comrade, who came up, commanded him to forbear, and, turning to the young man, accused him in turn of precipitation in plunging into the swollen-ford, and of intemperate violence in quarrelling with a man who was hastening to his assistance.

The young man, on hearing himself thus reproved by a man of advanced age and respectable appearance, immediately lowered his weapon, and said he would be sorry if he had done them injustice; but, in reality, it appeared to him as if they had suffered him to put his life in peril for want of a word of timely warning, which could be the part neither of honest men nor of good Christians, far less of respectable burgesses, such as they seemed to be.

"Fair son," said the elder person, "you seem, from your accent and complexion, a stranger; and you should recollect your dialect is not so easily comprehended by us, as perhaps it may be uttered by you."

"Well, father," answered the youth, "I do not care much about the ducking I have had, and I will readily forgive your being partly the cause, provided you will direct me to some place where I can have my clothes dried; for it is my only suit, and I must keep it somewhat decent."

"For whom do you take us, fair son?" said the elder stranger, in answer to this question.

"For substantial burgesses, unquestionably," said the youth; "or, hold—you, master, may be a money-broker, or a corn-merchant; and this man a butcher, or grazier."

"You have hit our capacities rarely," said the elder, smiling. "My business is indeed to trade in as much money as I can; and my gossip's dealings are somewhat of kin to the butcher's. As to your accommodation, we will try to serve you; but I must first know who you are, and whither you are going; for, in these times, the roads are filled with travellers on foot and horseback, who have anything in their head but honesty and the fear of God."

The young man cast another keen and penetrating glance on him who spoke, and on his silent companion, as if doubtful whether they, on their part, merited the confidence they demanded; and the result of his observation was as follows.

The eldest, and most remarkable of these men in dress and

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appearance, resembled the merchant or shopkeeper of the period. His jerkin, hose, and cloak, were of a dark uniform colour, but worn so threadbare, that the acute young Scot conceived that the wearer must be either very rich or very poor, probably the former. The fashion of the dress was close and short—a kind of garments which were not then held decorous among gentry, or even the superior class of citizens, who generally wore loose gowns which descended below the middle of the leg.

The expression of this man's countenance was partly attractive, and partly forbidding. His strong features, sunk cheeks, and hollow eyes, had nevertheless an expression of shrewdness and humour congenial to the character of the young adventurer. But then, those same sunken eyes, from under the shroud of thick black eyebrows, had something in them that was at once commanding and sinister. Perhaps this effect was increased by the low fur cap, much depressed on the forehead, and adding to the shade from under which those eyes peered out; but it is certain that the young stranger had some difficulty to reconcile his looks with the meanness of his appearance in other respects.

His cap, in particular, in which all men of any quality displayed either a brooch of gold or of silver, was ornamented with a paltry image of the Virgin, in lead, such as the poorer sort of pilgrims bring from Loretto.

His comrade was a stout-formed, middle-sized man, more than ten years younger than his companion, with a down-looking visage, and a very ominous smile, when by chance he gave way to that impulse, which was never, except in reply to certain secret signs that seemed to pass between him and the elder stranger. This man was armed with a sword and dagger; and underneath his plain habit, the Scotsman observed that he concealed a *jazeran*, or flexible shirt of linked mail, which, as being often worn by those, even of peaceful professions, who were called upon at that perilous period to be frequently abroad, confirmed the young man in his conjecture, that the wearer was by profession a butcher, grazier, or something of that description, called upon to be much abroad.

The young stranger, comprehending in one glance the result of the observation which has taken us some time to express, answered, after a moment's pause, "I am ignorant whom I may have the honour to address," making a slight reverence at the same time, "but I am indifferent who knows that I am a cadet

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of Scotland; and that I come to seek my fortune in France or elsewhere, after the custom of my countrymen."

"*Pasques-dieu!* and a gallant custom it is," said the elder stranger. "You seem a fine young springald, and at the right age to prosper, whether among men or women. What say you? I am a merchant, and want a lad to assist in my traffic—I suppose you are too much a gentleman to assist in such mechanical drudgery?"

"Fair sir," said the youth, "if your offer be seriously made—of which I have my doubts—I am bound to thank you for it, and I thank you accordingly; but I fear I should be altogether unfit for your service."

"What!" said the senior, "I warrant thou knowest better how to draw the bow, than how to draw a bill of charges,—canst handle a broadsword better than a pen—ha!"

"I am, master," answered the young Scot, "a braeman, and therefore, as we say, a bowman. But besides that, I have been in a convent, where the good fathers taught me to read and write, and even to cipher."

"*Pasques-dieu!* that is too magnificent," said the merchant. "By our Lady of Embrun, thou art a prodigy, man!"

"Rest you merry, fair master," said the youth, who was not much pleased with his new acquaintance's jocularity; "I must go dry myself, instead of standing dripping here, answering questions."

The merchant only laughed louder as he spoke, and answered, "*Pasques-dieu!* the proverb never fails—*fier comme un Ecossois*—but come, youngster, you are of a country I have a regard for, having traded in Scotland in my time—an honest poor set of folks they are; and, if you will come with us to the village, I will bestow on you a cup of burnt sack and a warm breakfast, to atone for your drenching.—But, *tête-bleu!* what do you with a hunting-glove on your hand? Know you not there is no hawking permitted in a royal chase?"

"I was taught that lesson," answered the youth, "by a rascally forester of the Duke of Burgundy. I did but fly the falcon I had brought with me from Scotland, and that I reckoned on for bringing me into some note, at a heron near Peronne, and the rascally schelm shot my bird with an arrow."

"What did you do?" said the merchant.

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"Beat him," said the youngster, brandishing his staff, "as near to death as one Christian man should belabour another—I wanted not to have his blood to answer for."

"Know you," said the burgess, "that had you fallen into the Duke of Burgundy's hands, he would have hung you up like a chestnut?"

"Ay, I am told he is as prompt as the King of France for that sort of work. But, as this happened near Peronne, I made a leap over the frontiers, and laughed at him. If he had not been so hasty, I might, perhaps, have taken service with him."

"He will have a heavy miss of such a paladin as you are, if the truce should break off," said the merchant, and threw a look at his own companion, who answered him with one of the downcast lowering smiles, which gleamed along his countenance, enlivening it as a passing meteor enlivens a winter sky.

The young Scot suddenly stopped, pulled his bonnet over his right eyebrow, as one that would not be ridiculed, and said firmly, "My masters, and especially you, sir, the elder, and who should be the wiser, you will find, I presume, no sound or safe jesting at my expense. I do not altogether like the tone of your conversation. I can take a jest with any man, and a rebuke, too, from my elder, and say, thank you, sir, if I know it to be deserved; but I do not like being borne in hand as if I were a child, when, God wot, I find myself man enough to belabour you both, if you provoke me too far."

The eldest man seemed like to choke with laughter at the lad's demeanour—his companion's hand stole to his sword-hilt, which the youth observing, dealt him a blow across the wrist, which made him incapable of grasping it; while his companion's mirth was only increased by the incident. "Hold, hold," he cried, "most doughty Scot, even for thine own dear country's sake; and you, gossip, forbear your menacing look. *Pasques-dieu!* let us be just traders, and set off the wetting against the knock on the wrist, which was given with so much grace and alacrity.—And hark ye, my young friend," he said to the young man, with a grave sternness which, in spite of all the youth could do, damped and overawed him, "no more violence. I am no fit object for it, and my gossip, as you may see, has had enough of it. Let me know your name."

"I can answer a civil question civilly," said the youth;

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"and will pay fitting respect to your age, if you do not urge my patience with mockery. Since I have been here in France and Flanders, men have called me, in their fantasy, the Varlet with the Velvet Pouch, because of this hawk-purse which I carry by my side; but my true name, when at home, is Quentin Durward."

"Durward!" said the querist; "is it a gentleman's name?"

"By fifteen descents in our family," said the young man; "and that makes me reluctant to follow any other trade than arms."

"A true Scot! Plenty of blood, plenty of pride, and right great scarcity of ducats, I warrant thee.—Well, gossip," he said to his companion, "go before us, and tell them to have some breakfast ready yonder at the Mulberry-grove; for this youth will do as much honour to it as a starved mouse to a housewife's cheese. And for the Bohemian—hark in thy ear"——

His comrade answered by a gloomy, but intelligent smile, and set forward at a round pace, while the elder man continued, addressing young Durward,—"You and I will walk leisurely forward together, and we may take a mass at Saint Hubert's Chapel in our way through the forest; for it is not good to think of our fleshly before our spiritual wants."

Durward, as a good Catholic, had nothing to object against this proposal, although he might probably have been desirous, in the first place, to have dried his clothes and refreshed himself. Meanwhile, they soon lost sight of their downward-looking companion, but continued to follow the same path which he had taken, until it led them into a wood of tall trees, mixed with thickets and brushwood, traversed by long avenues, through which were seen, as through a vista, the deer trotting in little herds with a degree of security which argued their consciousness of being completely protected.

"You asked me if I were a good bowman," said the young Scot—"Give me a bow and a brace of shafts, and you shall have a piece of venison in a moment."

"*Pasques-dieu!* my young friend," said his companion, "take care of that; my gossip yonder hath a special eye to the deer; they are under his charge, and he is a strict keeper."

"He hath more the air of a butcher, than of a gay forester," answered Durward. "I cannot think yon hang-dog look of his belongs to any one who knows the gentle rules of woodcraft."

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"Ah, my young friend," answered his companion, "my gossip hath somewhat an ugly favour to look upon at the first; but those who become acquainted with him, never are known to complain of him."

Quentin Durward found something singularly and disagreeably significant in the tone with which this was spoken; and, looking suddenly at the speaker, thought he saw in his countenance, in the slight smile that curled his upper lip, and the accompanying twinkle of his keen dark eye, something to justify his unpleasing surprise. "I have heard of robbers," he thought to himself, "and of wily cheats and cut-throats—what if yonder fellow be a murderer, and this old rascal his decoy-duck? I will be on my guard—they will get little by me but good Scottish knocks."

While he was thus reflecting, they came to a glade, where the large forest trees were more widely separated from each other, and where the ground beneath, cleared of underwood and bushes, was clothed with a carpet of the softest and most lovely verdure, which, screened from the scorching heat of the sun, was here more beautifully tender than it is usually to be seen in France. The trees in this secluded spot were chiefly beeches and elms of huge magnitude, which rose like great hills of leaves into the air. Amidst these magnificent sons of the earth, there peeped out, in the most open spot of the glade, a lowly chapel, near which trickled a small rivulet. Its architecture was of the rudest and most simple kind; and there was a very small lodge beside it, for the accommodation of a hermit or solitary priest, who remained there for regularly discharging the duty of the altar. In a small niche, over the arched doorway, stood a stone image of Saint Hubert, with the bugle-horn around his neck, and a leash of greyhounds at his feet. The situation of the chapel in the midst of a park or chase, so richly stocked with game, made the dedication to the Sainted Huntsman peculiarly appropriate.*

Towards this little devotional structure the old man directed his steps, followed by young Durward; and, as they approached, the priest, dressed in his sacerdotal garments, made his appearance, in the act of proceeding from his cell to the chapel, for the discharge, doubtless, of his holy office. Durward bowed his body reverently to the priest, as the respect due to his sacred

* Note B. Saint Hubert.

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office demanded; whilst his companion, with an appearance of still more deep devotion, kneeled on one knee to receive the holy man's blessing, and then followed him into church, with a step and manner expressive of the most heartfelt contrition and humility.

The inside of the chapel was adorned in a manner adapted to the occupation of the patron-saint while on earth. The richest furs of such animals as are made the objects of the chase in different countries, supplied the place of tapestry and hangings around the altar and elsewhere, and the characteristic emblazonments of bugles, bows, quivers, and other emblems of hunting, surrounded the walls, and were mingled with the heads of deer, wolves, and other animals considered beasts of sport. The whole adornments took an appropriate and silvan character; and the mass itself, being considerably shortened, proved to be of that sort which is called a *hunting-mass*, because in use before the noble and powerful, who, while assisting at the solemnity, are usually impatient to commence their favourite sport.

Yet, during this brief ceremony, Durward's companion seemed to pay the most rigid and scrupulous attention; while Durward, not quite so much occupied with religious thoughts, could not forbear blaming himself in his own mind, for having entertained suspicions derogatory to the character of so good and so humble a man. Far from now holding him as a companion and accomplice of robbers, he had much to do to forbear regarding him as a saint-like personage.

When mass was ended, they retired together from the chapel, and the elder said to his young comrade, "It is but a short walk from hence to the village—you may now break your fast with an unprejudiced conscience—follow me."

Turning to the right, and proceeding along a path which seemed gradually to ascend, he recommended to his companion by no means to quit the track, but, on the contrary, to keep the middle of it as nearly as he could. Durward could not help asking the cause of this precaution.

"You are now near the Court, young man," answered his guide; "and, *Pasques-dieu!* there is some difference betwixt walking in this region and on your own heathy hills. Every yard of this ground, excepting the path which we now occupy, is rendered dangerous, and well-nigh impracticable, by snares

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and traps, armed with scythe-blades, which shred off the unwary passenger's limb as sheerly as a hedge-bill lops a hawthorn-sprig—and calthrops that would pierce your foot through, and pit-falls deep enough to bury you in them for ever; for you are now within the precincts of the royal demesne, and we shall presently see the front of the Chateau."

"Were I the King of France," said the young man, "I would not take so much trouble with traps and gins, but would try instead to govern so well, that no man should dare to come near my dwelling with a bad intent; and for those who came there in peace and good-will, why, the more of them the merrier we should be."

His companion looked round affecting an alarmed gaze, and said, "Hush, hush, Sir Varlet with the Velvet Pouch! for I forgot to tell you, that one great danger of these precincts is, that the very leaves of the trees are like so many ears, which carry all which is spoken to the King's own cabinet."

"I care little for that," answered Quentin Durward; "I bear a Scottish tongue in my head, bold enough to speak my mind to King Louis's face, God bless him—and for the ears you talk of, if I could see them growing on a human head, I would crop them out of it with my wood-knife."

CHAPTER THIRD.

THE CASTLE.

Full in the midst a mighty pile arose,
Where iron-grated gates their strength oppose
To each invading step—and, strong and steep,
The battled walls arose, the fosse sunk deep.
Slow round the fortress roll'd the sluggish stream,
And high in middle air the warder's turrets gleam.

ANONYMOUS.

WHILE Durward and his new acquaintance thus spoke, they came in sight of the whole front of the Castle of Plessis-les-Tours, which, even in those dangerous times, when the great found themselves obliged to reside within places of fortified

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strength, was distinguished for the extreme and jealous care with which it was watched and defended.

From the verge of the wood where young Durward halted with his companion, in order to take a view of this royal residence, extended, or rather arose, though by a very gentle elevation, an open esplanade, devoid of trees and bushes of every description, excepting one gigantic and half-withered old oak. This space was left open, according to the rules of fortification in all ages, in order that an enemy might not approach the walls under cover, or unobserved from the battlements, and beyond it arose the Castle itself.

There were three external walls, battlemented and turreted from space to space, and at each angle, the second enclosure rising higher than the first, and being built so as to command the exterior defence in case it was won by the enemy; and being again, in the same manner, itself commanded by the third and innermost barrier. Around the external wall, as the Frenchman informed his young companion (for, as they stood lower than the foundation of the wall, he could not see it), was sunk a ditch of about twenty feet in depth, supplied with water by a dam-head on the river Cher, or rather on one of its tributary branches. In front of the second enclosure, he said, there ran another fosse, and a third, both of the same unusual dimensions, was led between the second and the innermost enclosure. The verge, both of the outer and inner circuit of this triple moat, was strongly fenced with palisades of iron, serving the purpose of what are called *chevaux-de-frise* in modern fortification, the top of each pale being divided into a cluster of sharp spikes, which seemed to render any attempt to climb over an act of self-destruction.

Far within the innermost enclosure arose the Castle itself, containing buildings of different periods, crowded around, and united with the ancient and grim-looking donjon-keep, which was older than any of them, and which rose, like a black Ethiopian giant, high into the air, while the absence of any windows larger than shot-holes, irregularly disposed for defence, gave the spectator the same unpleasant feeling which we experience on looking at a blind man. The other buildings seemed scarcely better adapted for the purposes of comfort, for the windows opened to an inner and enclosed courtyard; so that the whole external front looked much more like that of

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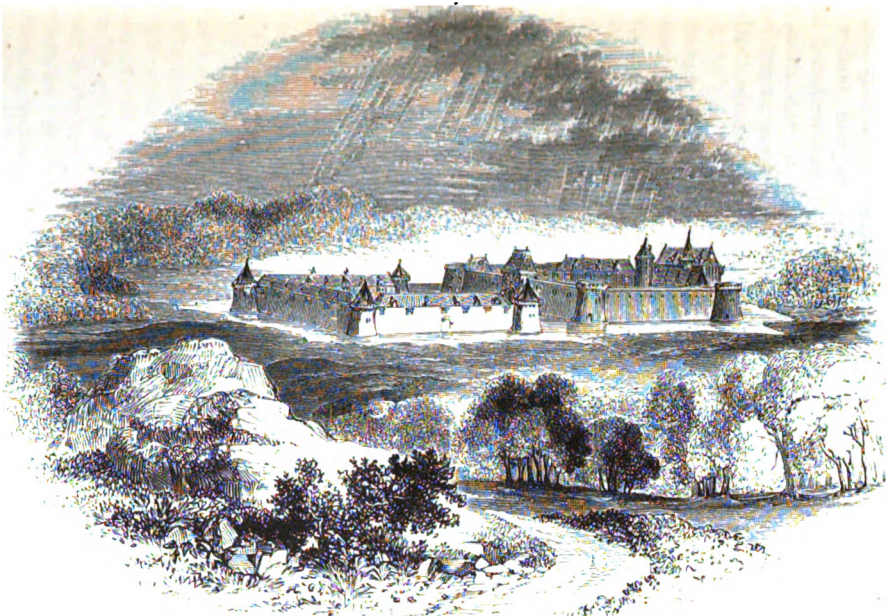

Castle of Plessis-les-Tours.—PAGE 50.

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a prison than a palace. The reigning King had even increased this effect; for, desirous that the additions which he himself had made to the fortifications should be of a character not easily distinguished from the original building (for, like many jealous persons, he loved not that his suspicions should be observed), the darkest-coloured brick and freestone were employed, and soot mingled with the lime, so as to give the whole Castle the same uniform tinge of extreme and rude antiquity.

This formidable place had but one entrance, at least Durward saw none along the spacious front, except where, in the centre of the first and outward boundary, arose two strong towers, the usual defences of a gateway; and he could observe their ordinary accompaniments, portcullis and drawbridge—of which the first was lowered, and the last raised. Similar entrance-towers were visible on the second and third bounding wall, but not in the same line with those on the outward circuit; because the passage did not cut right through the whole three enclosures at the same point, but, on the contrary, those who entered had to proceed nearly thirty yards betwixt the first and second wall, exposed, if their purpose were hostile, to missiles from both; and again, when the second boundary was passed, they must make a similar digression from the straight line, in order to attain the portal of the third and innermost enclosure; so that, before gaining the outer court, which ran along the front of the building, two narrow and dangerous defiles were to be traversed under a flanking discharge of artillery, and three gates, defended in the strongest manner known to the age, were to be successively forced.

Coming from a country alike desolated by foreign war and internal feuds,—a country, too, whose unequal and mountainous surface, abounding in precipices and torrents, affords so many situations of strength,—young Durward was sufficiently acquainted with all the various contrivances by which men, in that stern age, endeavoured to secure their dwellings; but he frankly owned to his companion that he did not think it had been in the power of art to do so much for defence, where nature had done so little; for the situation, as we have hinted, was merely the summit of a gentle elevation ascending upwards from the place where they were standing.

To enhance his surprise, his companion told him that the environs of the Castle, except the single winding-path by which

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the portal might be safely approached, were, like the thickets through which they had passed, surrounded with every species of hidden pit-fall, snare, and gin, to entrap the wretch who should venture thither without a guide; that upon the walls were constructed certain cradles of iron, called *swallows' nests*, from which the sentinels, who were regularly posted there, could, without being exposed to any risk, take deliberate aim at any who should attempt to enter without the proper signal or password of the day; and that the Archers of the Royal Guard performed that duty day and night, for which they received high pay, rich clothing, and much honour and profit at the hands of King Louis. "And now tell me, young man," he continued, "did you ever see so strong a fortress, and do you think there are men bold enough to storm it?"

The young man looked long and fixedly on the place, the sight of which interested him so much, that he had forgotten, in the eagerness of youthful curiosity, the wetness of his dress. His eye glanced, and his colour mounted to his cheek like that of a daring man who meditates an honourable action, as he replied, "It is a strong castle and strongly guarded; but there is no impossibility to brave men."

"Are there any in your country who could do such a feat?" said the elder, rather scornfully.

"I will not affirm that," answered the youth; "but there are thousands that, in a good cause, would attempt as bold a deed."

"Umph!"—said the senior, "perhaps you are yourself such a gallant!"

"I should sin if I were to boast where there is no danger," answered young Durward; "but my father has done as bold an act, and I trust I am no bastard."

"Well," said his companion, smiling, "you might meet your match, and your kindred withal in the attempt; for the Scottish Archers of King Louis's Life-guards stand sentinels on yonder walls—three hundred gentlemen of the best blood in your country."

"And were I King Louis," said the youth, in reply, "I would trust my safety to the faith of the three hundred Scottish gentlemen, throw down my bounding walls to fill up the moat, call in my noble peers and paladins, and live as became me, amid breaking of lances in gallant tournaments, and feasting of

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days with nobles, and dancing of nights with ladies, and have no more fear of a foe than I have of a fly."

His companion again smiled, and turning his back on the Castle, which, he observed, they had approached a little too nearly, he led the way again into the wood, by a more broad and beaten path than they had yet trodden. "This," he said, "leads us to the village of Plessis, as it is called, where you, as a stranger, will find reasonable and honest accommodation. About two miles onward lies the fine city of Tours, which gives name to this rich and beautiful earldom. But the village of Plessis, or Plessis of the Park, as it is sometimes called, from its vicinity to the royal residence, and the chase with which it is encircled, will yield you nearer, and as convenient hospitality."

"I thank you, kind master, for your information," said the Scot; "but my stay will be so short here, that if I fail not in a morsel of meat, and a drink of something better than water, my necessities in Plessis, be it of the park or the pool, will be amply satisfied."

"Nay," answered his companion, "I thought you had some friend to see in this quarter."

"And so I have—my mother's own brother," answered Durward; "and as pretty a man, before he left the braes of Angus, as ever planted brogue on heather."

"What is his name?" said the senior; "we will inquire him out for you; for it is not safe for you to go up to the Castle, where you might be taken for a spy."

"Now, by my father's hand!" said the youth, "I taken for a spy!—By Heaven, he shall brook cold iron that brands me with such a charge!—But for my uncle's name, I care not who knows it—it is Lesly. Lesly—an honest and noble name."

"And so it is I doubt not," said the old man; "but there are three of the name in the Scottish Guard."

"My uncle's name is Ludovic Lesly," said the young man.

"Of the three Leslys," answered the merchant, "two are called Ludovic."

"They call my kinsman Ludovic with the Scar," said Quentin.—"Our family names are so common in a Scottish house, that, where there is no land in the case, we always give a *to-name*."

"A *nom de guerre*, I suppose you to mean," answered his

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companion; "and the man you speak of, we, I think, call *Le Balafré*, from that scar on his face—a proper man, and a good soldier. I wish I may be able to help you to an interview with him, for he belongs to a set of gentlemen whose duty is strict, and who do not often come out of garrison, unless in the immediate attendance on the King's person.—And now, young man, answer me one question. I will wager you are desirous to take service with your uncle in the Scottish Guard. It is a great thing, if you propose so; especially as you are very young, and some years' experience is necessary for the high office which you aim at."

"Perhaps I may have thought on some such thing," said Durward, carelessly; "but if I did, the fancy is off."

"How so, young man?" said the Frenchman, something sternly—"Do you speak thus of a charge which the most noble of your countrymen feel themselves emulous to be admitted to?"

"I wish them joy of it," said Quentin, composedly.—"To speak plain, I should have liked the service of the French King full well; only dress me as fine, and feed me as high as you will, I love the open air better than being shut up in a cage or a swallow's nest yonder, as you call these same grated pepper-boxes. Besides," he added, in a lower voice, "to speak truth, I love not the Castle when the covin-tree* bears such acorns as I see yonder."

"I guess what you mean," said the Frenchman; "but speak yet more plainly."

"To speak more plainly, then," said the youth, "there grows a fair oak some flight-shot or so from yonder Castle—and on that oak hangs a man in a grey jerkin, such as this which I wear."

"Ay and indeed!" said the man of France—"*Pasques-dieu!* see what it is to have youthful eyes! Why, I did see something, but only took it for a raven among the branches. But the sight is no ways strange, young man; when the summer fades into autumn, and moonlight nights are long, and roads become unsafe, you will see a cluster of ten, ay of twenty such

* The large tree in front of a Scottish castle was sometimes called so. It is difficult to trace the derivation; but at that distance from the castle the laird received guests of rank, and thither he conveyed them on their departure.

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acorns, hanging on that old doddered oak.—But what then?—they are so many banners displayed to scare knaves; and for each rogue that hangs there, an honest man may reckon that there is a thief, a traitor, a robber on the highway, a *pilleur* and oppressor of the people, the fewer in France. These, young man, are signs of our Sovereign's justice."

"I would have hung them farther from my palace, though, were I King Louis," said the youth.—"In my country, we hang up dead corbies where living corbies haunt, but not in our gardens or pigeon-houses. The very scent of the carrion—faugh—reached my nostrils at the distance where we stood."

"If you live to be an honest and loyal servant of your Prince, my good youth," answered the Frenchman, "you will know there is no perfume to match the scent of a dead traitor."

"I shall never wish to live till I lose the scent of my nostrils or the sight of my eyes," said the Scot.—"Show me a living traitor, and here are my hand and my weapon; but when life is out, hatred should not live longer.—But here, I fancy, we come upon the village; where I hope to show you that neither ducking nor disgust have spoiled mine appetite for my breakfast. So, my good friend, to the hostelrie, with all the speed you may.—Yet, ere I accept of your hospitality, let me know by what name to call you."

"Men call me Maitre Pierre," answered his companion.—"I deal in no titles. A plain man, that can live on mine own good—that is my designation."

"So be it, Maitre Pierre," said Quentin, "and I am happy my good chance has thrown us together; for I want a word of seasonable advice, and can be thankful for it."

While they spoke thus, the tower of the Church, and a tall wooden crucifix, rising above the trees, showed that they were at the entrance of the village.

But Maitre Pierre, deflecting a little from the road, which had now joined an open and public causeway, said to his companion, that the inn to which he intended to introduce him stood somewhat secluded, and received only the better sort of travellers.

"If you mean those who travel with the better filled purses," answered the Scot, "I am none of the number, and will rather stand my chance of your flayers on the highway, than of your flayers in the hostelrie."

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"*Pasques-dieu!*" said his guide, "how cautious your countrymen of Scotland are! An Englishman, now, throws himself headlong into a tavern, eats and drinks of the best, and never thinks of the reckoning till his belly is full. But you forget, Master Quentin, since Quentin is your name, you forget I owe you a breakfast for the wetting which my mistake procured you —It is the penance of my offence towards you."

"In truth," said the light-hearted young man, "I had forgot wetting, offence, and penance, and all. I have walked my clothes dry, or nearly so, but I will not refuse your offer in kindness; for my dinner yesterday was a light one, and supper I had none. You seem an old and respectable burgess, and I see no reason why I should not accept your courtesy."

The Frenchman smiled aside, for he saw plainly that the youth, while he was probably half famished, had yet some difficulty to reconcile himself to the thoughts of feeding at a stranger's cost, and was endeavouring to subdue his inward pride by the reflection, that, in such slight obligations, the acceptor performed as complaisant a part as he by whom the courtesy was offered.

In the meanwhile, they descended a narrow lane, overshadowed by tall elms, at the bottom of which a gateway admitted them into the court-yard of an inn of unusual magnitude, calculated for the accommodation of the nobles and suitors who had business at the neighbouring Castle, where very seldom, and only when such hospitality was altogether unavoidable, did Louis XI. permit any of his Court to have apartments. A scutcheon, bearing the *fleur-de-lys*, hung over the principal door of the large irregular building; but there was about the yard and the offices little or none of the bustle which in those days, when attendants were maintained both in public and in private houses, marked that business was alive, and custom plenty. It seemed as if the stern and unsocial character of the royal mansion in the neighbourhood had communicated a portion of its solemn and terrific gloom even to a place designed, according to universal custom elsewhere, for the temple of social indulgence, merry society, and good cheer.

Maitre Pierre, without calling any one, and even without approaching the principal entrance, lifted the latch of a side door, and led the way into a large room, where a fagot was blazing on the hearth, and arrangements made for a substantial breakfast.

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"My gossip has been careful," said the Frenchman to the Scot.—"You must be cold, and I have commanded a fire; you must be hungry, and you shall have breakfast presently."

He whistled, and the landlord entered,—answered Maitre Pierre's *bon jour* with a reverence,—but in no respects showed any part of the prating humour properly belonging to a French publican of all ages.

"I expected a gentleman," said Maitre Pierre, "to order breakfast—Hath he done so?"

In answer, the landlord only bowed; and while he continued to bring, and arrange upon the table, the various articles of a comfortable meal, omitted to extol their merits by a single word. And yet the breakfast merited such eulogiums as French hosts are wont to confer upon their regales, as the reader will be informed in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

THE DÉJEUNER.

Sacred heaven! what masticators! what bread!
YORICK'S TRAVELS.

WE left our young stranger in France situated more comfortably than he had found himself since entering the territories of the ancient Gauls. The breakfast, as we hinted in the conclusion of the last Chapter, was admirable. There was a *pâté de Périgord*, over which a gastronome would have wished to live and die, like Homer's lotus-eaters, forgetful of kin, native country, and all social obligations whatever. Its vast walls of magnificent crust seemed raised like the bulwarks of some rich metropolitan city, an emblem of the wealth which they are designed to protect. There was a delicate ragout, with just that *petit point de l'ail* which Gascons love, and Scottishmen do not hate. There was, besides, a delicate ham, which had once supported a noble wild boar in the neighbouring wood of Montrichart. There was the most exquisite white bread, made into little round loaves called *boules* (whence the bakers took their French name of *boulangers*), of which the crust was so in-

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viting, that, even with water alone, it would have been a delicacy. But the water was not alone, for there was a flask of leather called *bottrine*, which contained about a quart of exquisite *Vin de Beaulne*. So many good things might have created appetite under the ribs of death. What effect, then, must they have produced upon a youngster of scarce twenty, who (for the truth must be told) had eaten little for the two last days, save the scarcely ripe fruit which chance afforded him an opportunity of plucking, and a very moderate portion of barley-bread? He threw himself upon the ragout, and the plate was presently vacant—he attacked the mighty pasty, marched deep into the bowels of the land, and, seasoning his enormous meal with an occasional cup of wine, returned to the charge again and again, to the astonishment of mine host, and the amusement of Maitre Pierre.

The latter, indeed, probably because he found himself the author of a kinder action than he had thought of, seemed delighted with the appetite of the young Scot; and when, at length, he observed that his exertions began to languish, endeavoured to stimulate him to new efforts, by ordering confections, *darioles*, and any other light dainties he could think of, to entice the youth to continue his meal. While thus engaged, Maitre Pierre's countenance expressed a kind of good-humour almost amounting to benevolence, which appeared remote from its ordinary sharp, caustic, and severe character. The aged almost always sympathise with the enjoyments of youth, and with its exertions of every kind, when the mind of the spectator rests on its natural poise, and is not disturbed by inward envy or idle emulation.

Quentin Durward also, while thus agreeably employed, could do no otherwise than discover that the countenance of his entertainer, which he had at first found so unprepossessing, mended when it was seen under the influence of the *Vin de Beaune*, and there was kindness in the tone with which he reproached Maitre Pierre, that he amused himself with laughing at his appetite, without eating anything himself.

"I am doing penance," said Maitre Pierre, "and may not eat anything before noon, save some comfiture and a cup of water.—Bid yonder lady," he added, turning to the innkeeper, "bring them hither to me."

The innkeeper left the room, and Maitre Pierre proceeded,—

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"Well, have I kept faith with you concerning the breakfast I promised you?"

"The best meal I have eaten," said the youth, "since I left Glen-houlakin."

"Glen—what?" demanded Maitre Pierre; "are you going to raise the devil, that you use such long-tailed words?"

"Glen-houlakin," answered Quentin, good-humouredly, "which is to say the Glen of the Midges, is the name of our ancient patrimony, my good sir. You have bought the right to laugh at the sound, if you please."

"I have not the least intention to offend," said the old man; "but I was about to say, since you like your present meal so well, that the Scottish Archers of the Guard eat as good a one, or a better, every day."

"No wonder," said Durward; "for if they be shut up in the *swallows' nests* all night, they must needs have a curious appetite in the morning."

"And plenty to gratify it upon," said Maitre Pierre. "They need not, like the Burgundians, chouse a bare back, that they may have a full belly—they dress like counts, and feast like abbots."

"It is well for them," said Durward.

"And wherefore will you not take service here, young man? Your uncle might, I dare say, have you placed on the file when there should a vacancy occur. And, hark in your ear, I myself have some little interest, and might be of some use to you. You can ride, I presume, as well as draw the bow?"

"Our race are as good horsemen as ever put a plated shoe into a steel stirrup; and I know not but I might accept of your kind offer. Yet, look you, food and raiment are needful things, but, in my case, men think of honour, and advancement, and brave deeds of arms. Your King Louis—God bless him, for he is a friend and ally of Scotland—but he lies here in this castle, or only rides about from one fortified town to another; and gains cities and provinces by politic embassies, and not in fair fighting. Now, for me, I am of the Douglases' mind, who always kept the fields, because they loved better to hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak."

"Young man," said Maitre Pierre, "do not judge too rashly of the actions of sovereigns. Louis seeks to spare the blood of his subjects, and cares not for his own. He showed himself a man of courage at Montl'héry."

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"Ay, but that was some dozen years ago or more," answered the youth.—"I should like to follow a master that would keep his honour as bright as his shield, and always venture foremost in the very throng of the battle."

"Why did you not tarry at Brussels, then, with the Duke of Burgundy? He would put you in the way to have your bones broken every day; and, rather than fail, would do the job for you himself—especially if he heard that you had beaten his forester."

"Very true," said Quentin; "my unhappy chance has shut that door against me."

"Nay, there are plenty of dare-devils abroad, with whom mad youngsters may find service," said his adviser. "What think you, for example, of William de la Marck?"

"What!" exclaimed Durward, "serve Him with the Beard—serve the Wild Boar of Ardennes—a captain of pillagers and murderers, who would take a man's life for the value of his gaberdine, and who slays priests and pilgrims as if they were so many lance-knights and men-at-arms? It would be a blot on my father's scutcheon for ever."

"Well, my young hot-blood," replied Maitre Pierre, "if you hold the *Sanglier* too unscrupulous, wherefore not follow the young Duke of Gueldres?"*

"Follow the foul fiend as soon," said Quentin. "Hark in your ear—he is a burden too heavy for earth to carry—hell gapes for him! Men say that he keeps his own father imprisoned, and that he has even struck him—Can you believe it?"

Maitre Pierre seemed somewhat disconcerted with the naïve horror with which the young Scotsman spoke of filial ingratitude, and he answered, "You know not, young man, how short a while the relations of blood subsist amongst those of elevated rank;" then changed the tone of feeling in which he had begun to speak, and added, gaily, "besides, if the Duke has beaten his father, I warrant you his father hath beaten him of old, so it is but a clearing of scores."

"I marvel to hear you speak thus," said the Scot, colouring with indignation; "grey hairs such as yours ought to have fitter subjects for jesting. If the old Duke did beat his son in childhood, he beat him not enough; for better he had died

* Note C. Duke of Gueldres.

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under the rod, than have lived to make the Christian world ashamed that such a monster had ever been baptized."

"At this rate," said Maitre Pierre, "as you weigh the characters of each prince and leader, I think you had better become a captain yourself; for where will one so wise find a chieftain fit to command him?"

"You laugh at me, Maitre Pierre," said the youth, good-humouredly, "and perhaps you are right; but you have not named a man who is a gallant leader, and keeps a brave party up here, under whom a man might seek service well enough."

"I cannot guess whom you mean."

"Why, he that hangs like Mahomet's coffin (a curse be upon Mahomet!) between the two loadstones—he that no man can call either French or Burgundian, but who knows to hold the balance between them both, and makes both of them fear and serve him, for as great princes as they be."

"I cannot guess whom you mean," said Maitre Pierre, thoughtfully.

"Why, whom should I mean but the noble Louis de Luxembourg, Count of Saint Paul, the High Constable of France? Yonder he makes his place good, with his gallant little army, holding his head as high as either King Louis, or Duke Charles, and balancing between them like the boy who stands on the midst of a plank, while two others are swinging on the opposite ends."*

"He is in danger of the worst fall of the three," said Maitre Pierre. "And hark ye, my young friend, you who hold pillaging such a crime, do you know that your politic Count of Saint Paul was the first who set the example of burning the country during the time of war? and that before the shameful devastation which he committed, open towns and villages, which made no resistance, were spared on all sides?"

"Nay, faith," said Durward, "if that be the case, I shall begin to think no one of these great men is much better than

* This part of Louis XIth's reign was much embarrassed by the intrigues of the Constable Saint Paul, who affected independence, and carried on intrigues with England, France, and Burgundy, at the same time. According to the usual fate of such variable politicians, the Constable ended by drawing upon himself the animosity of all the powerful neighbours whom he had in their turn amused and deceived. He was delivered up by the Duke of Burgundy to the King of France, tried, and hastily executed for treason, A.D. 1475.

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another, and that a choice among them is but like choosing a tree to be hung upon. But this Count de Saint Paul, this Constable, hath possessed himself by clean conveyance of the town which takes its name from my honoured saint and patron, Saint Quentin,"* (here he crossed himself), "and methinks, were I dwelling there, my holy patron would keep some look-out for me—he has not so many named after him as your more popular saints—and yet he must have forgotten me, poor Quentin Durward, his spiritual god-son, since he lets me go one day without food, and leaves me the next morning to the harbourage of Saint Julian, and the chance courtesy of a stranger, purchased by a ducking in the renowned river Cher, or one of its tributaries."

"Blaspheme not the saints, my young friend," said Maitre Pierre. "Saint Julian is the faithful patron of travellers; and peradventure, the blessed Saint Quentin hath done more and better for thee than thou art aware of."

As he spoke the door opened, and a girl, rather above than under fifteen years old, entered with a platter, covered with damask, on which was placed a small saucer of the dried plums, which have always added to the reputation of Tours, and a cup of the curiously chased plate which the goldsmiths of that city were anciently famous for executing with a delicacy of workmanship that distinguished them from the other cities of France, and even excelled the skill of the metropolis. The form of the goblet was so elegant, that Durward thought not of observing closely whether the material was of silver, or, like what had been placed before himself, of a baser metal, but so well burnished as to resemble the richer ore.

But the sight of the young person by whom this service was executed, attracted Durward's attention far more than the petty minutiæ of the duty which she performed.

He speedily made the discovery that a quantity of long black tresses, which, in the maiden fashion of his own country, were unadorned by any ornament, except a single chaplet lightly woven out of ivy leaves, formed a veil around a countenance, which, in its regular features, dark eyes, and pensive expression, resembled that of Melpomene, though there was a

* It was by his possession of this town of Saint Quentin that the Constable was able to carry on those political intrigues, which finally cost him so dear.

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faint glow on the cheek, and an intelligence on the lips and in the eye, which made it seem that gaiety was not foreign to a countenance so expressive, although it might not be its most habitual expression. Quentin even thought he could discern that depressing circumstances were the cause why a countenance so young and so lovely was graver than belongs to early beauty; and as the romantic imagination of youth is rapid in drawing conclusions from slight premises, he was pleased to infer, from what follows, that the fate of this beautiful vision was wrapped in silence and mystery.

"How now, Jacqueline?" said Maitre Pierre, when she entered the apartment—"Wherefore this? Did I not desire that Dame Perette should bring what I wanted?—*Pasques-dieu!*—Is she, or does she think herself, too good to serve me?"

"My kinswoman is ill at ease," answered Jacqueline, in a hurried yet a humble tone; "ill at ease, and keeps her chamber."

"She keeps it *alone*, I hope!" replied Maitre Pierre, with some emphasis; "I am *vieux routier*, and none of those upon whom feigned disorders pass for apologies."

Jacqueline turned pale, and even tottered at the answer of Maitre Pierre; for it must be owned, that his voice and looks, at all times harsh, caustic, and unpleasing, had, when he expressed anger or suspicion, an effect both sinister and alarming.

The mountain chivalry of Quentin Durward was instantly awakened, and he hastened to approach Jacqueline, and relieve her of the burden she bore, and which she passively resigned to him, while, with a timid and anxious look, she watched the countenance of the angry burgess. It was not in nature to resist the piercing and pity-craving expression of her looks, and Maitre Pierre proceeded, not merely with an air of diminished displeasure, but with as much gentleness as he could assume in countenance and manner, "I blame not thee, Jacqueline, and thou art too young to be, what it is pity to think thou must be one day—a false and treacherous thing, like the rest of thy giddy sex. No man ever lived to man's estate, but he had the opportunity to know you all.* Here is a Scottish cavalier will tell you the same."

Jacqueline looked for an instant on the young stranger as if

* It was a part of Louis's very unamiable character, and not the best part of it, that he entertained a great contempt for the understanding, and not less for the character, of the fair sex.

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to obey Maitre Pierre, but the glance, momentary as it was, appeared to Durward a pathetic appeal to him for support and sympathy; and with the promptitude dictated by the feelings of youth, and the romantic veneration for the female sex inspired by his education, he answered hastily, "That he would throw down his gage to any antagonist, of equal rank and equal age, who should presume to say such a countenance, as that which he now looked upon, could be animated by other than the purest and the truest mind."

The young woman grew deadly pale, and cast an apprehensive glance upon Maitre Pierre, in whom the bravado of the young gallant seemed only to excite laughter, more scornful than applausive. Quentin, whose second thoughts generally corrected the first, though sometimes after they had found utterance, blushed deeply at having uttered what might be construed into an empty boast, in presence of an old man of a peaceful profession; and, as a sort of just and appropriate penance, resolved patiently to submit to the ridicule which he had incurred. He offered the cup and trencher to Maitre Pierre with a blush in his cheek, and a humiliation of countenance, which endeavoured to disguise itself under an embarrassed smile.

"You are a foolish young man," said Maitre Pierre, "and know as little of women as of princes,—whose hearts," he said, crossing himself devoutly, "God keeps in his right hand."

"And who keeps those of the women then?" said Quentin, resolved, if he could help it, not to be borne down by the assumed superiority of this extraordinary old man, whose lofty and careless manner possessed an influence over him of which he felt ashamed.

"I am afraid you must ask of them in another quarter," said Maitre Pierre, composedly.

Quentin was again rebuffed, but not utterly disconcerted. "Surely," he said to himself, "I do not pay this same burgess of Tours all the deference which I yield him, on account of the miserable obligation of a breakfast, though it was a right good and substantial meal. Dogs and hawks are attached by feeding only—man must have kindness, if you would bind him with the cords of affection and obligation. But he is an extraordinary person; and that beautiful emanation that is even now vanishing—surely a thing so fair belongs not to this mean

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place, belongs not even to the money-gathering merchant himself, though he seems to exert authority over her, as doubtless he does over all whom chance brings within his little circle. It is wonderful what ideas of consequence these Flemings and Frenchmen attach to wealth—so much more than wealth deserves, that I suppose this old merchant thinks the civility I pay to his age is given to his money—I, a Scottish gentleman of blood and coat-armour, and he a mechanic of Tours!"

Such were the thoughts which hastily traversed the mind of young Durward; while Maitre Pierre said with a smile, and at the same time patting Jacqueline's head, from which hung down her long tresses, "This young man will serve me, Jacqueline,—thou mayst withdraw. I will tell thy negligent kinswoman she does ill to expose thee to be gazed on unnecessarily."

"It was only to wait on you," said the maiden. "I trust you will not be displeased with my kinswoman, since"——

"*Pasques-dieu!*" said the merchant, interrupting her, but not harshly, "do you bandy words with me, you brat, or stay you to gaze upon the youngster here?—Begone—he is noble, and his services will suffice me."

Jacqueline vanished; and so much was Quentin Durward interested in her sudden disappearance, that it broke his previous thread of reflection, and he complied mechanically, when Maitre Pierre said, in a tone of one accustomed to be obeyed, as he threw himself carelessly upon a large easy chair, "Place that tray beside me."

The merchant then let his dark eyebrows sink over his keen eyes, so that the last became scarce visible, or but shot forth occasionally a quick and vivid ray, like those of the sun setting behind a dark cloud, through which its beams are occasionally darted, but singly, and for an instant.

"That is a beautiful creature," said the old man at last, raising his head, and looking steadily and firmly at Quentin, when he put the question—"a lovely girl to be the servant of an *auberge?*—she might grace the board of an honest burgess; but 'tis a vile education, a base origin."

It sometimes happens that a chance shot will demolish a noble castle in the air, and the architect on such occasions entertains little good will towards him who fires it, although the damage on the offender's part may be wholly unintentional. Quentin

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was disconcerted, and was disposed to be angry—he himself knew not why—with this old man for acquainting him that this beautiful creature was neither more nor less than what her occupation announced—the servant of the *auberge*—an upper servant, indeed, and probably a niece of the landlord, or such like; but still a domestic, and obliged to comply with the humour of the customers, and particularly of Maitre Pierre, who probably had sufficiency of whims, and was rich enough to ensure their being attended to.

The thought, the lingering thought, again returned on him, that he ought to make the old gentleman understand the difference betwixt their conditions, and call on him to mark, that, how rich soever he might be, his wealth put him on no level with a Durward of Glen-houlakin. Yet, whenever he looked on Maitre Pierre's countenance with such a purpose, there was, notwithstanding the downcast look, pinched features, and mean and miserly dress, something which prevented the young man from asserting the superiority over the merchant which he conceived himself to possess. On the contrary, the oftener and more fixedly Quentin looked at him, the stronger became his curiosity to know who or what this man actually was; and he set him down internally for at least a Syndic or high magistrate of Tours, or one who was, in some way or other, in the full habit of exacting and receiving deference.

Meantime, the merchant seemed again sunk into a reverie, from which he raised himself only to make the sign of the cross devoutly, and to eat some of the dried fruit, with a morsel of biscuit. He then signed to Quentin to give him the cup, adding, however, by way of question, as he presented it—"You are noble, you say?"

"I surely am," replied the Scot, "if fifteen descents can make me so—So I told you before. But do not constrain yourself on that account, Maitre Pierre—I have always been taught it is the duty of the young to assist the more aged."

"An excellent maxim," said the merchant, availing himself of the youth's assistance in handing the cup, and filling it from a ewer which seemed of the same materials with the goblet, without any of those scruples in point of propriety, which, perhaps, Quentin had expected to excite.

"The devil take the ease and familiarity of this old mechanical burgher," said Durward once more to himself; "he uses

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the attendance of a noble Scottish gentleman with as little ceremony as I would that of a gillie from Glen-isla."

The merchant, in the meanwhile, having finished his cup of water, said to his companion, "From the zeal with which you seem to relish the *Vin de Beaune*, I fancy you would not care much to pledge me in this elemental liquor. But I have an elixir about me which can convert even the rock water into the richest wines of France."

As he spoke, he took a large purse from his bosom, made of the fur of the sea-otter, and streamed a shower of small silver pieces into the goblet, until the cup, which was but a small one, was more than half full.

"You have reason to be more thankful, young man," said Maitre Pierre, "both to your patron Saint Quentin, and to Saint Julian, than you seemed to be but now. I would advise you to bestow alms in their name. Remain in this hostelry until you see your kinsman, Le Balafre, who will be relieved from guard in the afternoon. I will cause him to be acquainted that he may find you here, for I have business in the Castle."

Quentin Durward would have said something to have excused himself from accepting the profuse liberality of his new friend; but Maitre Pierre, bending his dark brows, and erecting his stooping figure into an attitude of more dignity than he had yet seen him assume, said, in a tone of authority, "No reply, young man, but do what you are commanded."

With these words he left the apartment, making a sign, as he departed, that Quentin must not follow him.

The young Scotsman stood astounded, and knew not what to think of the matter. His first most natural, though perhaps not most dignified impulse, drove him to peep into the silver goblet, which assuredly was more than half full of silver pieces to the number of several scores, of which perhaps Quentin had never called twenty his own at one time during the course of his whole life. But could he reconcile it to his dignity as a gentleman, to accept the money of this wealthy plebeian?—This was a trying question; for, though he had secured a good breakfast, it was no great reserve upon which to travel either back to Dijon, in case he chose to hazard the wrath, and enter the service of the Duke of Burgundy, or to Saint Quentin, if he fixed on that of the Constable Saint Paul; for to one of those powers, if not to the King of France, he was determined to offer his services.

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He perhaps took the wisest resolution in the circumstances, in resolving to be guided by the advice of his uncle; and, in the meantime, he put the money into his velvet hawking-pouch, and called for the landlord of the house, in order to restore the silver cup—resolving, at the same time, to ask him some questions about this liberal and authoritative merchant.

The man of the house appeared presently; and, if not more communicative, was at least more loquacious, than he had been formerly. He positively declined to take back the silver cup. It was none of his, he said, but Maitre Pierre's, who had bestowed it on his guest. He had, indeed, four silver *hanaps* of his own, which had been left him by his grandmother, of happy memory, but no more like the beautiful carving of that in his guest's hand, than a peach was like a turnip,—that was one of the famous cups of Tours, wrought by Martin Dominique, an artist who might brag all Paris.

"And, pray, who is this Maitre Pierre," said Durward, interrupting him, "who confers such valuable gifts on strangers?"

"Who is Maitre Pierre?" said the host, dropping the words as slowly from his mouth, as if he had been distilling them.

"Ay," said Durward, hastily and peremptorily, "who is this Maitre Pierre, and why does he throw about his bounties in this fashion? And who is the butcherly-looking fellow whom he sent forward to order breakfast?"

"Why, fair sir, as to who Maitre Pierre is, you should have asked the question of himself; and for the gentleman who ordered breakfast to be made ready, may God keep us from his closer acquaintance!"

"There is something mysterious in all this," said the young Scot. "This Maitre Pierre tells me he is a merchant."

"And if he told you so," said the innkeeper, "surely he is a merchant."

"What commodities does he deal in?"

"Oh, many a fair matter of traffic," said the host; "and especially he has set up silk manufactories here which match those rich bales that the Venetians bring from India and Cathay. You might see the rows of mulberry-trees as you came hither, all planted by Maitre Pierre's command, to feed the silk-worms."

"And that young person who brought in the confections, who is she, my good friend?" said the guest.

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"My lodger, sir, with her guardian, some sort of aunt or kinswoman, as I think," replied the innkeeper.

"And do you usually employ your guests in waiting on each other?" said Durward; "for I observed that Maitre Pierre would take nothing from your hand, or that of your attendant."

"Rich men may have their fancies, for they can pay for them," said the landlord; "this is not the first time that Maitre Pierre has found the true way to make gentlefolks serve at his beck."

The young Scotsman felt somewhat offended at the insinuation; but, disguising his resentment, he asked whether he could be accommodated with an apartment at this place for a day, and perhaps longer.

"Certainly," the innkeeper replied; "for whatever time he was pleased to command it."

"Could he be permitted," he asked, "to pay his respects to the ladies, whose fellow-lodger he was about to become?"

The innkeeper was uncertain. "They went not abroad," he said, "and received no one at home."

"With the exception, I presume, of Maitre Pierre?" said Durward.

"I am not at liberty to name any exceptions," answered the man, firmly but respectfully.

Quentin, who carried the notions of his own importance pretty high, considering how destitute he was of means to support them, being somewhat mortified by the innkeeper's reply, did not hesitate to avail himself of a practice common enough in that age. "Carry to the ladies," he said, "a flask of *verndt* with my humble duty; and say, that Quentin Durward, of the house of Glen-houlakin, a Scottish cavalier of honour, and now their fellow-lodger, desires the permission to dedicate his homage to them in a personal interview."

The messenger departed, and returned, almost instantly, with the thanks of the ladies, who declined the proffered refreshment, and, with their acknowledgments to the Scottish cavalier, regretted that, residing there in privacy, they could not receive his visit.

Quentin bit his lip, took a cup of the rejected *verndt*, which the host had placed on the table. "By the mass, but this is a strange country," said he to himself, "where merchants and mechanics exercise the manners and munificence of nobles, and

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little travelling damsels, who hold their court in a *cabaret*, keep their state like disguised princesses! I will see that black-browed maiden again, or it will go hard, however;" and having formed this prudent resolution, he demanded to be conducted to the apartment which he was to call his own.

The landlord presently ushered him up a turret staircase, and from thence along a gallery, with many doors opening from it, like those of cells in a convent; a resemblance which our young hero, who recollected, with much ennui, an early specimen of a monastic life, was far from admiring. The host paused at the very end of the gallery, selected a key from the large bunch which he carried at his girdle, opened the door, and showed his guest the interior of a turret-chamber, small, indeed, but which, being clean and solitary, and having the pallet bed, and the few articles of furniture, in unusually good order, seemed, on the whole, a little palace.

"I hope you will find your dwelling agreeable here, fair sir," said the landlord.—"I am bound to pleasure every friend of Maitre Pierre."

"Oh, happy ducking!" exclaimed Quentin Durward, cutting a caper on the floor, so soon as his host had retired: "Never came good luck in a better or a wetter form. I have been fairly deluged by my good fortune."

As he spoke thus, he stepped towards the little window, which, as the turret projected considerably from the principal line of the building, not only commanded a very pretty garden, of some extent, belonging to the inn, but overlooked, beyond its boundary, a pleasant grove of those very mulberry-trees, which Maitre Pierre was said to have planted for the support of the silk-worm. Besides, turning the eye from these more remote objects, and looking straight along the wall, the turret of Quentin was opposite to another turret, and the little window at which he stood commanded a similar little window, in a corresponding projection of the building. Now, it would be difficult for a man twenty years older than Quentin, to say why this locality interested him more than either the pleasant garden or the grove of mulberry-trees; for, alas! eyes which have been used for forty years and upwards, look with indifference on little turret-windows, though the lattice be half open to admit the air, while the shutter is half closed to exclude the sun, or perhaps a too curious eye—nay, even though there

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hang on the one side of the casement a lute, partly mantled by a light veil of sea-green silk. But, at Durward's happy age, such *accidents*, as a painter would call them, form sufficient foundation for a hundred airy visions and mysterious conjectures, at recollection of which the full-grown man smiles while he sighs, and sighs while he smiles.

As it may be supposed that our friend Quentin wished to learn a little more of his fair neighbour, the owner of the lute and veil,—as it may be supposed he was at least interested to know whether she might not prove the same whom he had seen in humble attendance on Maitre Pierre, it must of course be understood, that he did not produce a broad staring visage and person in full front of his own casement. Durward knew better the art of bird-catching; and it was to his keeping his person skilfully withdrawn on one side of his window, while he peeped through the lattice, that he owed the pleasure of seeing a white, round, beautiful arm, take down the instrument, and that his ears had presently after their share in the reward of his dexterous management.

The maid of the little turret, of the veil, and of the lute, sung exactly such an air as we are accustomed to suppose flowed from the lips of the high-born dames of chivalry, when knights and troubadours listened and languished. The words had neither so much sense, wit, or fancy, as to withdraw the attention from the music, nor the music so much of art, as to drown all feeling of the words. The one seemed fitted to the other; and if the song had been recited without the notes, or the air played without the words, neither would have been worth noting. It is, therefore, scarcely fair to put upon record lines intended not to be said or read, but only to be sung. But such scraps of old poetry have always had a sort of fascination for us; and as the tune is lost for ever—unless Bishop happens to find the notes, or some lark teaches Stephens to warble the air*—we will risk our credit, and the taste of the Lady of the Lute, by preserving the verses, simple and even rude as they are:—

* [Sir Henry R. Bishop, the popular composer, and sometime professor of music in Edinburgh University, died in 1855. Miss Catherine Stephens was a delightful vocalist, who performed at the principal concerts and musical festivals about the time this was written. In 1838 she became Countess of Essex, by her marriage with George, the fifth Earl.]

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"Ah! County Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea,
The orange flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.
The lark, his lay who thrill'd all day,
Sits hush'd his partner nigh;
Breeze, bird, and flower, confess the hour,*
But where is County Guy?

"The village maid steals through the shade,
Her shepherd's suit to hear;
To beauty shy, by lattice high,
Sings high-born Cavalier.
The star of Love, all stars above,
Now reigns o'er earth and sky;
And high and low the influence know—
But where is County Guy?"

Whatever the reader may think of this simple ditty, it had a powerful effect on Quentin, when married to heavenly airs and sung by a sweet and melting voice, the notes mingling with the gentle breezes which wafted perfumes from the garden, and the figure of the songstress being so partially and obscurely visible, as threw a veil of mysterious fascination over the whole.

At the close of the air, the listener could not help showing himself more boldly than he had yet done, in a rash attempt to see more than he had yet been able to discover. The music instantly ceased—the casement was closed, and a dark curtain, dropped on the inside, put a stop to all further observation on the part of the neighbour in the next turret.

Durward was mortified and surprised at the consequence of his precipitance, but comforted himself with the hope, that the Lady of the Lute could neither easily forego the practice of an instrument which seemed so familiar to her, nor cruelly resolve to renounce the pleasures of fresh air and an open window, for the churlish purpose of preserving for her own exclusive ear the sweet sounds which she created. There came, perhaps, a little feeling of personal vanity to mingle with these consolatory reflections. If, as he shrewdly suspected, there was a beautiful dark-tressed damsel inhabitant of the one turret, he could not but be conscious that a handsome, young, roving, bright-locked gallant, a cavalier of fortune, was the tenant of the other; and

* [This line, in the first edition, reads
"Breeze, bird, and flower, they know the hour."]

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romances, those prudent instructors, had taught his youth, that if damsels were shy, they were yet neither void of interest nor of curiosity in their neighbour's affairs.

Whilst Quentin was engaged in these sage reflections, a sort of attendant or chamberlain of the inn informed him that a cavalier desired to speak with him below.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

THE MAN-AT-ARMS.

> Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
> Seeking the bubble reputation
> Even in the cannon's mouth.
>
> As You Like It.

The cavalier who awaited Quentin Durward's descent into the apartment where he had breakfasted, was one of those of whom Louis XI. had long since said that they held in their hands the fortune of France, as to them were intrusted the direct custody and protection of the royal person.

Charles the Sixth had instituted this celebrated body, the Archers, as they were called, of the Scottish Body-guard, with better reason than can generally be alleged for establishing round the throne a guard of foreign and mercenary troops. The divisions which tore from his side more than half of France, together with the wavering and uncertain faith of the nobility who yet acknowledged his cause, rendered it impolitic and unsafe to commit his personal safety to their keeping. The Scottish nation was the hereditary enemy of the English, and the ancient, and, as it seemed, the natural allies of France. They were poor, courageous, faithful—their ranks were sure to be supplied from the superabundant population of their own country, than which none in Europe sent forth more or bolder adventurers. Their high claims of descent, too, gave them a good title to approach the person of a monarch more closely than other troops, while the comparative smallness of their numbers prevented the possibility of their mutinying, and becoming masters where they ought to be servants.

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On the other hand, the French monarchs made it their policy to conciliate the affections of this select band of foreigners, by allowing them honorary privileges and ample pay, which last most of them disposed of with military profusion in supporting their supposed rank. Each of them ranked as a gentleman in place and honour; and their near approach to the King's person gave them dignity in their own eyes, as well as importance in those of the nation of France. They were sumptuously armed, equipped, and mounted; and each was entitled to allowance for a squire, a valet, a page, and two yeomen, one of whom was termed *coutelier*, from the large knife which he wore to despatch those whom in the *mêlée* his master had thrown to the ground. With these followers, and a corresponding equipage, an Archer of the Scottish Guard was a person of quality and importance; and vacancies being generally filled up by those who had been trained in the service as pages or valets, the cadets of the best Scottish families were often sent to serve under some friend and relation in those capacities, until a chance of preferment should occur.

The coutelier and his companion, not being noble or capable of this promotion, were recruited from persons of inferior quality; but as their pay and appointments were excellent, their masters were easily able to select from among their wandering countrymen the strongest and most courageous to wait upon them in these capacities.

Ludovic Lesly, or, as we shall more frequently call him, Le Balafré, by which name he was generally known in France, was upwards of six feet high, robust, strongly compacted in person, and hard-favoured in countenance, which latter attribute was much increased by a large and ghastly scar, which, beginning on his forehead, and narrowly missing his right eye, had laid bare his cheek-bone, and descended from thence almost to the tip of his ear, exhibiting a deep seam, which was sometimes scarlet, sometimes purple, sometimes blue, and sometimes approaching to black; but always hideous, because at variance with the complexion of the face in whatever state it chanced to be, whether agitated or still, flushed with unusual passion, or in its ordinary state of weatherbeaten and sunburnt swarthiness.

His dress and arms were splendid. He wore his national bonnet, crested with a tuft of feathers, and with a Virgin Mary

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of massive silver for a brooch. These brooches had been presented to the Scottish Guard, in consequence of the King, in one of his fits of superstitious piety, having devoted the swords of his guard to the service of the Holy Virgin, and, as some say, carried the matter so far as to draw out a commission to Our Lady as their Captain General. The Archer's gorget, arm-pieces, and gauntlets, were of the finest steel, curiously inlaid with silver, and his hauberk, or shirt of mail, was as clear and bright as the frostwork of a winter morning upon fern or brier. He wore a loose surcoat or cassock, of rich blue velvet, open at the sides like that of a herald, with a large white St. Andrew's cross of embroidered silver bisecting it both before and behind —his knees and legs were protected by hose of mail and shoes of steel—a broad strong poniard (called the *Mercy of God*) hung by his right side—the baldric for his two-handed sword, richly embroidered, hung upon his left shoulder; but, for convenience, he at present carried in his hand that unwieldy weapon, which the rules of his service forbade him to lay aside.

Quentin Durward, though, like the Scottish youth of the period, he had been early taught to look upon arms and war, thought he had never seen a more martial-looking, or more completely equipped and accomplished man-at-arms, than now saluted him in the person of his mother's brother, called Ludovic with the Scar, or Le Balafré; yet he could not but shrink a little from the grim expression of his countenance, while, with its rough moustaches, he brushed first the one and then the other cheek of his kinsman, welcomed his nephew to France, and, in the same breath, asked what news from Scotland.

"Little good tidings, dear uncle," replied young Durward; "but I am glad that you know me so readily."

"I would have known thee, boy, in the *landes* of Bordeaux, had I met thee marching there like a crane on a pair of stilts.* But sit thee down—sit thee down—if there is sorrow to hear of, we will have wine to make us bear it.—Ho! old Pinch-Measure, our good host, bring us of thy best, and that in an instant."

The well-known sound of the Scottish-French was as familiar in the taverns near Plessis, as that of the Swiss-French in

* The crutches or stilts, which in Scotland are used to pass rivers. They are employed by the peasantry of the country near Bordeaux, to traverse those deserts of loose sand called Landes.

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the modern *guinguettes* of Paris; and promptly—ay, with the promptitude of fear and precipitation, was it heard and obeyed. A flagon of champagne stood before them, of which the elder took a draught, while the nephew helped himself only to a moderate sip, to acknowledge his uncle's courtesy, saying, in excuse, that he had already drunk wine that morning.

"That had been a rare good apology in the mouth of thy sister, fair nephew," said La Balafré; "you must fear the wine-pot less, if you would wear beard on your face, and write yourself soldier. But, come—come—unbuckle your Scottish mail-bag—give us the news of Glen-houlakin—How doth my sister?"

"Dead, fair uncle," answered Quentin, sorrowfully.

"Dead!" echoed his uncle, with a tone rather marked by wonder than sympathy—"why, she was five years younger than I, and I was never better in my life. Dead! the thing is impossible. I have never had so much as a headache, unless after revelling out my two or three days' furlough with the brethren of the joyous science—and my poor sister is dead!—And your father, fair nephew, hath he married again?"

And, ere the youth could reply, he read the answer in his surprise at the question, and said, "What! no?—I would have sworn that Allan Durward was no man to live without a wife. He loved to have his house in order—loved to look on a pretty woman too; and was somewhat strict in life withal—matrimony did all this for him. Now, I care little about these comforts; and I can look on a pretty woman without thinking on the sacrament of wedlock—I am scarce holy enough for that."

"Alas! dear uncle, my mother was left a widow a year since, when Glen-houlakin was harried by the Ogilvies. My father, and my two uncles, and my two elder brothers, and seven of my kinsmen, and the harper, and the tasker, and some six more of our people, were killed in defending the castle; and there is not a burning hearth or a standing stone in all Glen-houlakin."

"Cross of Saint Andrew!" said Le Balafré; "that is what I call an onslaught! Ay, these Ogilvies were ever but sorry neighbours to Glen-houlakin—an evil chance it was; but fate of war—fate of war.—When did this mishap befall, fair nephew?" With that he took a deep draught of wine, and

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shook his head with much solemnity, when his kinsman replied, that his family had been destroyed upon the festival of Saint Jude last by-past.

"Look ye there," said the soldier; "I said it was all chance —on that very day I and twenty of my comrades carried the Castle of Roche-noir by storm, from Amaury Bras-de-fer, a captain of free lances, whom you must have heard of. I killed him on his own threshold, and gained as much gold as made this fair chain, which was once twice as long as it now is—and that minds me to send part of it on an holy errand,—Here, Andrew—Andrew!"

Andrew, his yeoman, entered, dressed like the Archer himself in the general equipment, but without the armour for the limbs,—that of the body more coarsely manufactured—his cap without a plume, and his cassock made of serge, or ordinary cloth instead of rich velvet. Untwining his gold chain from his neck, Balafré twisted off, with his firm and strong-set teeth, about four inches from the one end of it, and said to his attendant, "Here, Andrew, carry this to my gossip, jolly Father Boniface, the monk of St. Martin's—greet him well from me, by the same token that he could not say God save ye when we last parted at midnight—Tell my gossip that my brother and sister, and some others of my house, are all dead and gone, and I pray him to say masses for their souls as far as the value of these links will carry him, and to do on trust what else may be necessary to free them from Purgatory. And hark ye, as they were just-living people, and free from all heresy, it may be that they are well-nigh out of limbo already, so that a little matter may have them free of the fetlocks; and in that case, look ye, ye will say I desire to take out the balance of the gold in curses upon a generation called the Ogilvies of Angus-shire, in what way soever the church may best come at them. You understand all this, Andrew?"

The coutelier nodded.

"Then look that none of the links find their way to the wine-house ere the Monk touches them; for if it so chance, thou shalt taste of saddle-girth and stirrup-leather, till thou art as raw as Saint Bartholomew.—Yet hold, I see thy eye has fixed on the wine measure, and thou shalt not go without tasting."

So saying he filled him a brimful cup, which the coutelier drank off, and retired to do his patron's commission.

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"And now, fair nephew, let us hear what was your own fortune in this unhappy matter."

"I fought it out among those who were older and stouter than I was, till we were all brought down," said Durward, "and I received a cruel wound."

"Not a worse slash than I received ten years since myself," said Le Balafré.—"Look at this now, my fair nephew," tracing the dark crimson gash which was imprinted on his face—"An Ogilvie's sword never ploughed so deep a furrow."

"They ploughed deep enough," answered Quentin, sadly; "but they were tired at last, and my mother's entreaties procured mercy for me, when I was found to retain some spark of life; but although a learned monk of Aberbrothick, who chanced to be our guest at the fatal time, and narrowly escaped being killed in the fray, was permitted to bind my wounds, and finally to remove me to a place of safety, it was only on promise, given both by my mother and him, that I should become a monk."

"A monk!" exclaimed the uncle—"Holy Saint Andrew! that is what never befell me. No one, from my childhood upwards, ever so much as dreamed of making me a monk—And yet I wonder when I think of it; for you will allow that, bating the reading and writing, which I could never learn, and the psalmody, which I could never endure, and the dress, which is that of a mad beggar—Our Lady forgive me!—[here he crossed himself]—and their fasts, which do not suit my appetite, I would have made every whit as good a monk as my little gossip at St. Martin's yonder. But I know not why, none ever proposed the station to me.—Oh so, fair nephew, you were to be a monk, then—and wherefore, I pray you?"

"That my father's house might be ended, either in the cloister or in the tomb," answered Quentin, with deep feeling.

"I see," answered his uncle—"I comprehend. Cunning rogues—very cunning! They might have been cheated, though; for, look ye, fair nephew, I myself remember the canon Robersart who had taken the vows, and afterwards broke out of cloister, and became a captain of Free Companions. He had a mistress, the prettiest wench I ever saw, and three as beautiful children—There is no trusting monks, fair nephew,—no trusting them—they may become soldiers and fathers when you least expect it—but on with your tale."

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"I have little more to tell," said Durward, "except that, considering my poor mother to be in some degree a pledge for me, I was induced to take upon me the dress of a novice, and conformed to the cloister rules, and even learned to read and write."

"To read and write!" exclaimed Le Balafré, who was one of that sort of people who think all knowledge is miraculous which chances to exceed their own—"To write, say'st thou, and to read! I cannot believe it—never Durward could write his name that ever I heard of, nor Lesly either. I can answer for one of them—I can no more write than I can fly. Now, in Saint Louis's name, how did they teach it you?"

"It was troublesome at first," said Durward, "but became more easy by use; and I was weak with my wounds, and loss of blood, and desirous to gratify my preserver, Father Peter, and so I was the more easily kept to my task. But after several months' languishing, my good kind mother died, and as my health was now fully restored, I communicated to my benefactor, who was also Sub-Prior of the Convent, my reluctance to take the vows; and it was agreed between us, since my vocation lay not to the cloister, that I should be sent out into the world to seek my fortune, and that, to save the Sub-Prior from the anger of the Ogilvies, my departure should have the appearance of flight; and to colour it, I brought off the Abbot's hawk with me. But I was regularly dismissed, as will appear from the hand and seal of the Abbot himself."

"That is right, that is well," said his uncle. "Our King cares little what other theft thou mayst have made, but hath a horror at anything like a breach of the cloister. And, I warrant thee, thou hadst no great treasure to bear thy charges?"

"Only a few pieces of silver," said the youth; "for to you, fair uncle, I must make a free confession."

"Alas!" replied Le Balafré, "that is hard. Now, though I am never a hoarder of my pay, because it doth ill to bear a charge about one in these perilous times, yet I always have (and I would advise you to follow my example) some odd gold chain or bracelet, or carcanet, that serves for the ornament of my person, and can at need spare a superfluous link or two, or it may be a superfluous stone for sale, that can answer any immediate purpose.—But you may ask, fair kinsman, how you are to come by such toys as this?"—(he shook his chain with com-

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placent triumph)—"they hang not on every bush—they grow not in the fields like the daffodils, with whose stalks children make knight's collars. What then!—you may get such where I got this, in the service of the good King of France, where there is always wealth to be found, if a man has but the heart to seek it, at the risk of a little life or so."

"I understood," said Quentin, evading a decision to which he felt himself as yet scarcely competent, "that the Duke of Burgundy keeps a more noble state than the King of France, and that there is more honour to be won under his banners—that good blows are struck there, and deeds of arms done; while the most Christian King, they say, gains his victories by his ambassadors' tongues."

"You speak like a foolish boy, fair nephew," answered he with the Scar; "and yet, I bethink me, when I came hither I was nearly as simple: I could never think of a King but what I supposed him either sitting under the high deas, and feasting amid his high vassals and Paladins, eating *blanc manger*, with a great gold crown upon his head, or else charging at the head of his troops like Charlemagne in the romaunts, or like Robert Bruce or William Wallace in our own true histories, such as Barbour and the Minstrel. Hark in thine ear, man—it is all moonshine in the water. Policy—policy does it all. But what is policy, you will say? It is an art this French King of ours has found out, to fight with other men's swords, and to wage his soldiers out of other men's purses. Ah! it is the wisest prince that ever put purple on his back—and yet he weareth not much of that neither—I see him often go plainer than I would think befitted me to do."

"But you meet not my exception, fair uncle," answered young Durward; "I would serve, since serve I must in a foreign land, somewhere where a brave deed, were it my hap to do one, might work me a name."

"I understand you, my fair nephew," said the royal man-at-arms, "I understand you passing well; but you are unripe in these matters. The Duke of Burgundy is a hot-brained, impetuous, pudding-headed, iron-ribbed dare-all. He charges at the head of his nobles and native knights, his liegemen of Artois and Hainault; think you, if you were there, or if I were there myself, that we could be much farther forward than the Duke and all his brave nobles of his own land? If we were not up

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with them, we had a chance to be turned on the Provost-Marshal's hands for being slow in making to; if we were abreast of them, all would be called well, and we might be thought to have deserved our pay; and grant that I was a spear's length or so in the front, which is both difficult and dangerous in such a *mêlée* where all do their best, why, my lord duke says, in his Flemish tongue, when he sees a good blow struck, 'Ha! *gut getroffen!* a good lance—a brave Scot—give him a florin to drink our health;' but neither rank nor lands, nor treasures, come to the stranger in such a service—all goes to the children of the soil."

"And where should it go, in Heaven's name, fair uncle?" demanded young Durward.

"To him that protects the children of the soil," said Balafré, drawing up his gigantic height. "Thus says King Louis:—'My good French peasant—mine honest Jacques Bonhomme—get you to your tools, your plough and your harrow, your pruning knife and your hoe—here is my gallant Scot that will fight for you, and you shall only have the trouble to pay him—And you, my most serene duke, my illustrious count, and my most mighty marquis, e'en rein up your fiery courage till it is wanted, for it is apt to start out of the course, and to hurt its master; here are my companies of ordonance—here are my French Guards—here are, above all, my Scottish Archers, and mine honest Ludovic with the Scar, who will fight, as well or better than you, with all that undisciplined valour, which, in your fathers' time, lost Cressy and Azincour.' Now, see you not in which of these states a cavalier of fortune holds the highest rank, and must come to the highest honour?"

"I think I understand you, fair uncle," answered the nephew; "but, in my mind, honour cannot be won where there is no risk. Sure, this is—I pray you pardon me—an easy and almost slothful life, to mount guard round an elderly man whom no one thinks of harming, to spend summer-day and winter-night up in yonder battlements, and shut up all the while in iron cages, for fear you should desert your posts—uncle, uncle, it is but the hawk upon his perch, who is never carried out to the fields!"

"Now, by Saint Martin of Tours, the boy has some spirit! a right touch of the Lesly in him; much like myself, though always with a little more folly in it. Hark ye, youth—Long

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live the King of France!—scarce a day but there is some commission in hand, by which some of his followers may win both coin and credit. Think not that the bravest and most dangerous deeds are done by daylight. I could tell you of some, as scaling castles, making prisoners, and the like, where one who shall be nameless hath run higher risk, and gained greater favour, than any desperado in the train of desperate Charles of Burgundy. And if it please his Majesty to remain behind, and in the background, while such things are doing, he hath the more leisure of spirit to admire, and the more liberality of hand to reward the adventurers, whose dangers, perhaps, and whose feats of arms, he can better judge of than if he had personally shared them. Oh, 'tis a sagacious and most politic monarch!"

His nephew paused, and then said, in a low but impressive tone of voice, "The good Father Peter used often to teach me there might be much danger in deeds by which little glory was acquired. I need not say to you, fair uncle, that I do in course suppose that these secret commissions must needs be honourable."

"For whom or for what take you me, fair nephew?" said Balafré, somewhat sternly; "I have not been trained, indeed, in the cloister, neither can I write or read. But I am your mother's brother; I am a loyal Lesly. Think you that I am like to recommend to you anything unworthy? The best knight in France, Du Guesclin himself, if he were alive again, might be proud to number my deeds among his achievements."

"I cannot doubt your warranty, fair uncle," said the youth; "you are the only adviser my mishap has left me. But is it true, as fame says, that this King keeps a meagre Court here at his Castle of Plessis? No repair of nobles or courtiers, none of his grand feudatories in attendance, none of the high officers of the crown; half solitary sports, shared only with the menials of his household; secret councils, to which only low and obscure men are invited; rank and nobility depressed, and men raised from the lowest origin to the kingly favour—all this seems unregulated, resembles not the manners of his father, the noble Charles, who tore from the fangs of the English lion this more than half-conquered kingdom of France."

"You speak like a giddy child," said Le Balafré; "and even as a child, you harp over the same notes on a new string. Look

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you: if the King employs Oliver Dain, his barber, to do what Oliver can do better than any peer of them all, is not the kingdom the gainer? If he bids his stout Provost-Marshal, Tristan, arrest such or such a seditious burgher, take off such or such a turbulent noble, the deed is done and no more of it; when, were the commission given to a duke or peer of France, he might perchance send the King back a defiance in exchange. If, again, the King pleases to give to plain Ludovic le Balafré a commission which he will execute, instead of employing the High Constable, who would perhaps betray it, doth it not show wisdom? Above all, doth not a monarch of such conditions best suit cavaliers of fortune, who must go where their services are most highly prized, and most frequently in demand?—No, no, child; I tell thee Louis knows how to choose his confidants, and what to charge them with; suiting, as they say, the burden to each man's back. He is not like the King of Castile, who choked of thirst, because the great butler was not beside to hand his cup. —But hark to the bell of Saint Martin's! I must hasten back to the Castle.—Farewell—make much of yourself, and at eight to-morrow morning present yourself before the drawbridge, and ask the sentinel for me. Take heed you step not off the straight and beaten path in approaching the portal! There are such traps and snap-haunches as may cost you a limb, which you will sorely miss. You shall see the King, and learn to judge him for yourself—farewell."

So saying, Balafré hastily departed, forgetting, in his hurry, to pay for the wine he had called for, a shortness of memory incidental to persons of his description, and which his host, overawed, perhaps, by the nodding bonnet and ponderous two-handed sword, did not presume to use any efforts for correcting. It might have been expected that, when left alone, Durward would have again betaken himself to his turret, in order to watch for the repetition of those delicious sounds which had soothed his morning reverie. But that was a chapter of romance, and his uncle's conversation had opened to him a page of the real history of life. It was no pleasing one, and for the present the recollections and reflections which it excited were qualified to overpower other thoughts, and especially all of a light and soothing nature.

Quentin resorted to a solitary walk along the banks of the rapid Cher, having previously inquired of his landlord for one

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which he might traverse without fear of disagreeable interruption from snares and pitfalls, and there endeavoured to compose his turmoiled and scattered thoughts, and consider his future motions, upon which his meeting with his uncle had thrown some dubiety.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

THE BOHEMIANS.

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dantingly gaed he,
He play'd a spring and danced a round
Beneath the gallows tree!

OLD SONG.

THE manner in which Quentin Durward had been educated was not of a kind to soften the heart, or perhaps to improve the moral feeling. He, with the rest of his family, had been trained to the chase as an amusement, and taught to consider war as their only serious occupation, and that it was the great duty of their lives stubbornly to endure, and fiercely to retaliate, the attacks of their feudal enemies, by whom their race had been at last almost annihilated. And yet there mixed with these feuds a spirit of rude chivalry, and even courtesy, which softened their rigour; so that revenge, their only justice, was still prosecuted with some regard to humanity and generosity. The lessons of the worthy old monk, better attended to, perhaps, during a long illness and adversity, than they might have been in health and success, had given young Durward still farther insight into the duties of humanity towards others; and, considering the ignorance of the period, the general prejudices entertained in favour of a military life, and the manner in which he himself had been bred, the youth was disposed to feel more accurately the moral duties incumbent on his station than was usual at the time.

He reflected on his interview with his uncle with a sense of embarrassment and disappointment. His hopes had been high; for although intercourse by letters was out of the question, yet a pilgrim, or an adventurous trafficker, or a crippled

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soldier, sometimes brought Lesly's name to Glen-houlakin, and all united in praising his undaunted courage, and his success in many petty enterprises which his master had intrusted to him. Quentin's imagination had filled up the sketch in his own way, and assimilated his successful and adventurous uncle (whose exploits probably lost nothing in the telling) to some of the champions and knights-errant of whom minstrels sang, and who won crowns and kings' daughters by dint of sword and lance. He was now compelled to rank his kinsman greatly lower in the scale of chivalry; but blinded by the high respect paid to parents, and those who approach that character—moved by every early prejudice in his favour—inexperienced besides, and passionately attached to his mother's memory, he saw not, in the only brother of that dear relation, the character he truly held, which was that of an ordinary mercenary soldier, neither much worse nor greatly better than many of the same profession whose presence added to the distracted state of France.

Without being wantonly cruel, Le Balafré was, from habit, indifferent to human life and human suffering; he was profoundly ignorant, greedy of booty, unscrupulous how he acquired it, and profuse in expending it on the gratification of his passions. The habit of attending exclusively to his own wants and interests, had converted him into one of the most selfish animals in the world; so that he was seldom able, as the reader may have remarked, to proceed far in any subject without considering how it applied to himself, or, as it is called, making the case his own, though not upon feelings connected with the golden rule, but such as were very different. To this must be added, that the narrow round of his duties and his pleasures had gradually circumscribed his thoughts, hopes, and wishes, and quenched in a great measure the wild spirit of honour, and desire of distinction in arms, by which his youth had been once animated. Balafré was, in short, a keen soldier, hardened, selfish, and narrow-minded; active and bold in the discharge of his duty, but acknowledging few objects beyond it, except the formal observance of a careless devotion, relieved by an occasional debauch with brother Boniface, his comrade and confessor. Had his genius been of a more extended character, he would probably have been promoted to some important command, for the King, who knew every soldier of his body-guard personally, reposed much confidence in Balafré's courage and fidelity; and,

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besides, the Scot had either wisdom or cunning enough perfectly to understand, and ably to humour, the peculiarities of that sovereign. Still, however, his capacity was too much limited to admit of his rising to higher rank, and though smiled on and favoured by Louis on many occasions, Balafré continued a mere Life-guards-man, or Scottish Archer.

Without seeing the full scope of his uncle's character, Quentin felt shocked at his indifference to the disastrous extirpation of his brother-in-law's whole family, and could not help being surprised, moreover, that so near a relative had not offered him the assistance of his purse, which, but for the generosity of Maitre Pierre, he would have been under the necessity of directly craving from him. He wronged his uncle, however, in supposing that this want of attention to his probable necessities was owing to avarice. Not precisely needing money himself at that moment, it had not occurred to Balafré that his nephew might be in exigencies; otherwise, he held a near kinsman so much a part of himself, that he would have provided for the weal of the living nephew, as he endeavoured to do for that of his deceased sister and her husband. But whatever was the motive, the neglect was very unsatisfactory to young Durward, and he wished more than once he had taken service with the Duke of Burgundy before he quarrelled with his forester. "Whatever had then become of me," he thought to himself, "I should always have been able to keep up my spirits with the reflection, that I had, in case of the worst, a stout back-friend in this uncle of mine. But now I have seen him, and, woe worth him, there has been more help in a mere mechanical stranger, than I have found in my own mother's brother, my countryman and a cavalier! One would think the slash, that has carved all comeliness out of his face, had let at the same time every drop of gentle blood out of his body."

Durward now regretted he had not had an opportunity to mention Maitre Pierre to Le Balafré, in the hope of obtaining some farther account of that personage: but his uncle's questions had followed fast on each other, and the summons of the great bell of Saint Martin of Tours had broken off their conference rather suddenly. That old man, he thought to himself, was crabbed and dogged in appearance, sharp and scornful in language, but generous and liberal in his actions; and such a stranger is worth a cold kinsman—"What says our old Scottish proverb?—'Better

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kind fremit, than fremit kindred.'* I will find out that man, which, methinks, should be no difficult task, since he is so wealthy as mine host bespeaks him. He will give me good advice for my governance, at least; and if he goes to strange countries, as many such do, I know not but his may be as adventurous a service as that of those Guards of Louis."

As Quentin framed this thought, a whisper from those recesses of the heart in which lies much that the owner does not know of, or will not acknowledge willingly, suggested that, perchance, the lady of the turret, she of the veil and lute, might share that adventurous journey.

As the Scottish youth made these reflections, he met two grave-looking men, apparently citizens of Tours, whom, doffing his cap with the reverence due from youth to age, he respectfully asked to direct him to the house of Maitre Pierre.

"The house of whom, my fair son?" said one of the passengers.

"Of Maitre Pierre, the great silk-merchant, who planted all the mulberry-trees in the park yonder," said Durward.

"Young man," said one of them who was nearest to him, "you have taken up an idle trade a little too early."

"And have chosen wrong subjects to practise your fooleries upon," said the farther one, still more gruffly. "The Syndic of Tours is not accustomed to be thus talked to by strolling jesters from foreign parts."

Quentin was so much surprised at the causeless offence which these two decent-looking persons had taken at a very simple and civil question, that he forgot to be angry at the rudeness of their reply, and stood staring after them as they walked on with amended pace, often looking back at him, as if they were desirous to get as soon as possible out of his reach.

He next met a party of vine-dressers, and addressed to them the same question; and in reply, they demanded to know whether he wanted Maitre Pierre, the schoolmaster? or Maitre Pierre, the carpenter? or Maitre Pierre, the beadle? or half-a-dozen of Maitre Pierres besides. When none of those corresponded

* *Better kind strangers than estranged kindred.* The motto is engraved on a dirk, belonging to a person who had but too much reason to choose such a device. It was left by him to my father, and is connected with a strange course of adventures, which may one day be told. The weapon is now in my possession.

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with the description of the person after whom he inquired, the peasants accused him of jesting with them impertinently, and threatened to fall upon him and beat him, in guerdon of his raillery. The oldest amongst them, who had some influence over the rest, prevailed on them to desist from violence.

"You see by his speech and his fool's cap," said he, "that he is one of the foreign mountebanks who are come into the country, and whom some call magicians and soothsayers, and some jugglers, and the like, and there is no knowing what tricks they have amongst them. I have heard of such a one paying a liard to eat his bellyful of grapes in a poor man's vineyard; and he ate as many as would have loaded a wain, and never undid a button of his jerkin—and so let him pass quietly, and keep his way, as we will keep ours.—And you, friend, if you would shun worse, walk quietly on, in the name of God, our Lady of Marmoutier, and Saint Martin of Tours, and trouble us no more about your Maitre Pierre, which may be another name for the devil, for aught we know."

The Scot, finding himself much the weaker party, judged it his wisest course to walk on without reply; but the peasants, who at first shrunk from him in horror, at his supposed talents for sorcery and grape-devouring, took heart of grace as he got to a distance, and having uttered a few cries and curses, finally gave them emphasis with a shower of stones, although at such a distance as to do little or no harm to the object of their displeasure. Quentin, as he pursued his walk, began to think, in his turn, either that he himself lay under a spell, or that the people of Touraine were the most stupid, brutal, and inhospitable of the French peasants. The next incident which came under his observation did not tend to diminish this opinion.

On a slight eminence, rising above the rapid and beautiful Cher, in the direct line of his path, two or three large chestnut-trees were so happily placed as to form a distinguished and remarkable group; and beside them stood three or four peasants, motionless, with their eyes turned upwards, and fixed, apparently, upon some object amongst the branches of the tree next to them. The meditations of youth are seldom so profound as not to yield to the slightest impulse of curiosity, as easily as the lightest pebble, dropped casually from the hand, breaks the surface of a limpid pool. Quentin hastened his pace, and ran lightly up the rising ground, time enough to witness the ghastly

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spectacle which attracted the notice of these gazers—which was nothing less than the body of a man, convulsed by the last agony, suspended on one of the branches.

"Why do you not cut him down?" said the young Scot, whose hand was as ready to assist affliction, as to maintain his own honour when he deemed it assailed.

One of the peasants, turning on him an eye from which fear had banished all expression but its own, and a face as pale as clay, pointed to a mark cut upon the bark of the tree, having the same rude resemblance to a *fleur-de-lys* which certain talismanic scratches, well known to our revenue officers, bear to a *broad arrow*. Neither understanding nor heeding the import of this symbol, young Durward sprung lightly as the ounce up into the tree, drew from his pouch that most necessary implement of a Highlander or woodsman, the trusty *skene-dhu*,* and, calling to those below to receive the body on their hands, cut the rope asunder in less than a minute after he had perceived the exigency.

But his humanity was ill seconded by the bystanders. So far from rendering Durward any assistance, they seemed terrified at the audacity of his action, and took to flight with one consent, as if they feared their merely looking on might have been construed into accession to his daring deed. The body, unsupported from beneath, fell heavily to earth in such a manner, that Quentin, who presently afterwards jumped down, had the mortification to see that the last sparks of life were extinguished. He gave not up his charitable purpose, however, without farther efforts. He freed the wretched man's neck from the fatal noose, undid the doublet, threw water on the face, and practised the other ordinary remedies resorted to for recalling suspended animation.

While he was thus humanely engaged, a wild clamour of tongues, speaking a language which he knew not, arose around him; and he had scarcely time to observe that he was surrounded by several men and women of a singular and foreign appearance, when he found himself roughly seized by both arms, while a naked knife, at the same moment, was offered to his throat.

* Black knife; a species of knife without clasp or hinge, formerly much used by the Highlanders, who seldom travelled without such an ugly weapon, though it is now rarely used.

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"Pale slave of Eblis!" said a man, in imperfect French, "are you robbing him you have murdered?—But we have you—and you shall abye it."

There were knives drawn on every side of him, as these words were spoken, and the grim and distorted countenances which glared on him, were like those of wolves rushing on their prey.

Still the young Scot's courage and presence of mind bore him out. "What mean ye, my masters?" he said; "if that be your friend's body, I have just now cut him down, in pure charity, and you will do better to try to recover his life, than to misuse an innocent stranger to whom he owes his chance of escape."

The women had by this time taken possession of the dead body, and continued the attempts to recover animation which Durward had been making use of, though with the like bad success; so that, desisting from their fruitless efforts, they seemed to abandon themselves to all the Oriental expressions of grief; the women making a piteous wailing, and tearing their long black hair, while the men seemed to rend their garments, and to sprinkle dust upon their heads. They gradually became so much engaged in their mourning rites, that they bestowed no longer any attention on Durward, of whose innocence they were probably satisfied from circumstances. It would certainly have been his wisest plan to have left these wild people to their own courses, but he had been bred in almost reckless contempt of danger, and felt all the eagerness of youthful curiosity.

The singular assemblage, both male and female, wore turbans and caps, more similar, in general appearance, to his own bonnet, than to the hats commonly worn in France. Several of the men had curled black beards, and the complexion of all was nearly as dark as that of Africans. One or two, who seemed their chiefs, had some tawdry ornaments of silver about their necks and in their ears, and wore showy scarfs of yellow, or scarlet, or light green; but their legs and arms were bare, and the whole troop seemed wretched and squalid in appearance. There were no weapons among them that Durward saw, except the long knives with which they had lately menaced him, and one short crooked sabre, or Moorish sword, which was worn by an active-looking young man, who often laid his

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hand upon the hilt, while he surpassed the rest of the party in his extravagant expressions of grief, and seemed to mingle with them threats of vengeance.

The disordered and yelling group were so different in appearance from any beings whom Quentin had yet seen, that he was on the point of concluding them to be a party of Saracens, of those "heathen hounds," who were the opponents of gentle knights and Christian monarchs, in all the romances which he had heard or read, and was about to withdraw himself from a neighbourhood so perilous, when a galloping of horse was heard, and the supposed Saracens, who had raised by this time the body of their comrade upon their shoulders, were at once charged by a party of French soldiers.

This sudden apparition changed the measured wailing of the mourners into irregular shrieks of terror. The body was thrown to the ground in an instant, and those who were around it showed the utmost and most dexterous activity in escaping, under the bellies as it were of the horses, from the point of the lances which were levelled at them, with exclamations of "Down with the accursed heathen thieves—take and kill—bind them like beasts—spear them like wolves!"

These cries were accompanied with corresponding acts of violence; but such was the alertness of the fugitives, the ground being rendered unfavourable to the horsemen by thickets and bushes, that only two were struck down and made prisoners, one of whom was the young fellow with the sword, who had previously offered some resistance. Quentin, whom fortune seemed at this period to have chosen for the butt of her shafts, was at the same time seized by the soldiers, and his arms, in spite of his remonstrances, bound down with a cord; those who apprehended him showing a readiness and despatch in the operation, which proved them to be no novices in matters of police.

Looking anxiously to the leader of the horsemen, from whom he hoped to obtain liberty, Quentin knew not exactly whether to be pleased or alarmed upon recognising in him the down-looking and silent companion of Maitre Pierre. True, whatever crime these strangers might be accused of, this officer might know, from the history of the morning, that he, Durward, had no connection with them whatever; but it was a more difficult question, whether this sullen man would be

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either a favourable judge or a willing witness in his behalf, and he felt doubtful whether he would mend his condition by making any direct application to him.

But there was little leisure for hesitation. "Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André," said the down-looking officer to two of his band, "these same trees stand here quite convenient. I will teach these misbelieving, thieving sorcerers, to interfere with the King's justice, when it has visited any of their accursed race. Dismount, my children, and do your office briskly."

Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André were in an instant on foot, and Quentin observed that they had each, at the crupper and pommel of his saddle, a coil or two of ropes, which they hastily undid, and showed that, in fact, each coil formed a halter, with the fatal noose adjusted, ready for execution. The blood ran cold in Quentin's veins, when he saw three cords selected, and perceived that it was proposed to put one around his own neck. He called on the officer loudly, reminded him of their meeting that morning, claimed the right of a free-born Scotsman, in a friendly and allied country, and denied any knowledge of the persons along with whom he was seized, or of their misdeeds.

The officer whom Durward thus addressed scarce deigned to look at him while he was speaking, and took no notice whatever of the claim he preferred to prior acquaintance. He barely turned to one or two of the peasants who were now come forward, either to volunteer their evidence against the prisoners, or out of curiosity, and said gruffly, "Was yonder young fellow with the vagabonds?"

"That he was, sir, an it please your noble Provostship," answered one of the clowns; "he was the very first blasphemously to cut down the rascal whom his Majesty's justice most deservedly hung up, as we told your worship."

"I'll swear by God, and Saint Martin of Tours, to have seen him with their gang," said another, "when they pillaged our *métairie*."

"Nay, but, father," said a boy, "yonder heathen was black, and this youth is fair; yonder one had short curled hair, and this hath long fair locks."

"Ay, child," said the peasant, "and perhaps you will say yonder one had a green coat and this a grey jerkin. But his worship, the Provost, knows that they can change their com-

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plexions as easily as their jerkins, so that I am still minded he was the same."

"It is enough that you have seen him intermeddle with the course of the King's justice, by attempting to recover an executed traitor," said the officer.—"Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André, despatch."

"Stay, signior officer!" exclaimed the youth, in mortal agony —"hear me speak—let me not die guiltlessly—my blood will be required of you by my countrymen in this world, and by Heaven's justice in that which is to follow."

"I will answer for my actions in both," said the Provost, coldly; and made a sign with his left hand to the executioners; then, with a smile of triumphant malice, touched with his forefinger his right arm, which hung suspended in a scarf, disabled probably by the blow which Durward had dealt him that morning.

"Miserable, vindictive wretch!" answered Quentin, persuaded by that action that private revenge was the sole motive of this man's rigour, and that no mercy whatever was to be expected from him.

"The poor youth raves," said the functionary: "speak a word of comfort to him ere he make his transit, Trois-Eschelles; thou art a comfortable man in such cases, when a confessor is not to be had. Give him one minute of ghostly advice, and despatch matters in the next. I must proceed on the rounds. —Soldiers, follow me!"

The Provost rode on, followed by his guard, excepting two or three, who were left to assist in the execution. The unhappy youth cast after him an eye almost darkened by despair, and thought he heard, in every tramp of his horse's retreating hoofs, the last slight chance of his safety vanish. He looked around him in agony, and was surprised, even in that moment, to see the stoical indifference of his fellow-prisoners. They had previously testified every sign of fear, and made every effort to escape; but now, when secured, and destined apparently to inevitable death, they awaited its arrival with the utmost composure. The scene of fate before them, gave, perhaps, a more yellow tinge to their swarthy cheeks; but it neither agitated their features, nor quenched the stubborn haughtiness of their eye. They seemed like foxes, which, after all their wiles and artful attempts at escape are exhausted, die with a silent and

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sullen fortitude, which wolves and bears, the fiercer objects of the chase, do not exhibit.

They were undaunted by the conduct of the fatal executioners, who went about their work with more deliberation than their master had recommended, and which probably arose from their having acquired by habit a kind of pleasure in the discharge of their horrid office. We pause an instant to describe them, because, under a tyranny, whether despotic or popular, the character of the hangman becomes a subject of great importance.

These functionaries were essentially different in their appearance and manners. Louis used to call them Democritus and Heraclitus, and their master, the Provost, termed them, *Jean-qui-pleure*, and *Jean-qui-rit*.

Trois-Eschelles was a tall, thin, ghastly man, with a peculiar gravity of visage, and a large rosary round his neck, the use of which he was accustomed piously to offer to those sufferers on whom he did his duty. He had one or two Latin texts continually in his mouth on the nothingness and vanity of human life; and, had it been regular to have enjoyed such a plurality, he might have held the office of confessor to the jail in commendam with that of executioner. Petit-André, on the contrary, was a joyous-looking, round, active, little fellow, who rolled about in execution of his duty as if it were the most diverting occupation in the world. He seemed to have a sort of fond affection for his victims, and always spoke of them in kindly and affectionate terms. They were his poor honest fellows, his pretty dears, his gossips, his good old fathers, as their age or sex might be; and as Trois-Eschelles endeavoured to inspire them with a philosophical or religious regard to futurity, Petit-André seldom failed to refresh them with a jest or two, as if to induce them to pass from life as something that was ludicrous, contemptible, and not worthy of serious consideration.

I cannot tell why or wherefore it was, but these two excellent persons, notwithstanding the variety of their talents, and the rare occurrence of such among persons of their profession, were both more utterly detested than perhaps any creatures of their kind, whether before or since; and the only doubt of those who knew aught of them was, whether the grave and pathetic Trois-Eschelles, or the frisky, comic, alert Petit-André was the object of the greatest fear, or of the deepest execration. It is certain

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they bore the palm in both particulars over every hangman in France, unless it were perhaps their master, Tristan l'Hermite, the renowned Provost-Marshal, or *his* master, Louis XI.*

It must not be supposed that these reflections were of Quentin Durward's making. Life, death, time, and eternity, were swimming before his eyes—a stunning and overwhelming prospect, from which human nature recoiled in its weakness; though human pride would fain have borne up. He addressed himself to the God of his fathers; and when he did so, the little rude and unroofed chapel, which now held almost all his race but himself, rushed on his recollection. "Our feudal enemies gave my kindred graves in our own land," he thought, "but I must feed the ravens and kites of a foreign land, like an excommunicated felon!" The tears gushed involuntarily from his eyes. Trois-Eschelles, touching one shoulder, gravely congratulated him on his heavenly disposition for death, and pathetically exclaiming, *Beati qui in Domino moriuntur*, remarked, the soul was happy that left the body while the tear was in the eye. Petit-André, slapping the other shoulder, called out, "Courage, my fair son! since you must begin the dance, let the ball open gaily, for all the rebecs are in tune," twitching the halter at the same time, to give point to his joke. As the youth turned his dismayed looks, first on one and then on the other, they made their meaning plainer by gently urging him forward to the fatal tree, and bidding him be of good courage, for it would be over in a moment.

In this fatal predicament, the youth cast a distracted look around him. "Is there any good Christian who hears me," he said, "that will tell Ludovic Lesly of the Scottish Guard, called

* One of these two persons, I learned from the *Chronique de Jean de Troyes*,† but too late to avail myself of the information, might with more accuracy have been called Petit-Jean, than Petit-André. This was actually the name of the son of Henry de Cousin, master executioner of the High Court of Justice. The Constable Saint Paul was executed by him with such dexterity, that the head, when struck off, struck the ground at the same time with the body. This was in 1475.

† [The History of Louis XI., King of France, attributed to Jean de Troyes, forms a supplement to the Memoirs of Philip de Commines. It was originally published under the title of "The Chronicle of the very Christian and very victorious Louis of Valois," etc., 1460 to 1483; but was afterwards vulgarly called *La Chronique Scandaleuse*.

A convenient edition of the translation of *Comenines* and this supplement forms 2 volumes of Bohn's series of French Memoirs.]

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in this country Le Balafré, that his nephew is here basely murdered?"

The words were spoken in good time, for an Archer of the Scottish Guard, attracted by the preparations for the execution, was standing by, with one or two other chance passengers, to witness what was passing.

"Take heed what you do," he said to the executioners; "if this young man be of Scottish birth, I will not permit him to have foul play."

"Heaven forbid, Sir Cavalier," said Trois-Eschelles; "but we must obey our orders," drawing Durward forward by one arm.

"The shortest play is ever the fairest," said Petit-André, pulling him onward by the other.

But Quentin had heard words of comfort, and, exerting his strength, he suddenly shook off both the finishers of the law, and, with his arms still bound, ran to the Scottish Archer. "Stand by me, countryman," he said, in his own language, "for the love of Scotland and Saint Andrew! I am innocent —I am your own native landsman. Stand by me, as you shall answer at the last day."

"By Saint Andrew! they shall make at you through me," said the Archer, and unsheathed his sword.

"Cut my bonds, countryman," said Quentin, "and I will do something for myself."

This was done with a touch of the Archer's weapon; and the liberated captive, springing suddenly on one of the Provost's guard, wrested from him a halbert with which he was armed; "And now," he said, "come on, if you dare!"

The two officers whispered together.

"Ride thou after the Provost-Marshal," said Trois-Eschelles, "and I will detain them here, if I can.—Soldiers of the Provost's guard, stand to your arms."

Petit-André mounted his horse, and left the field, and the other Marshals-men in attendance drew together so hastily at the command of Trois-Eschelles, that they suffered the other two prisoners to make their escape during the confusion. Perhaps they were not very anxious to detain them; for they had of late been sated with the blood of such wretches, and like other ferocious animals, were, through long slaughter, become tired of carnage. But the pretext was, that they thought themselves immediately called upon to attend to the safety of Trois-

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Eschelles; for there was a jealousy, which occasionally led to open quarrels, betwixt the Scottish Archers and the Marshal-guards, who executed the orders of their Provost.

"We are strong enough to beat the proud Scots twice over, if it be your pleasure," said one of these soldiers to Trois-Eschelles.

But that cautious official made a sign to him to remain quiet, and addressed the Scottish Archer with great civility. "Surely, sir, this is a great insult to the Provost-Marshal, that you should presume to interfere with the course of the King's justice, duly and lawfully committed to his charge; and it is no act of justice to me, who am in lawful possession of my criminal. Neither is it a well-meant kindness to the youth himself, seeing that fifty opportunities of hanging him may occur, without his being found in so happy a state of preparation as he was before your ill-advised interference."

"If my young countryman," said the Scot, smiling, "be of opinion I have done him an injury, I will return him to your charge without a word more dispute."

"No, no!—for the love of Heaven, no!" exclaimed Quentin. "I would rather you swept my head off with your long sword—it would better become my birth, than to die by the hands of such a foul churl."

"Hear how he revileth," said the finisher of the law. "Alas! how soon our best resolutions pass away!—he was in a blessed frame for departure but now, and in two minutes he has become a contemner of authorities."

"Tell me at once," said the Archer, "what has this young man done?"

"Interfered," answered Trois-Eschelles, with some earnestness, "to take down the dead body of a criminal, when the *fleur-de-lys* was marked on the tree where he was hung with my own proper hand."

"How is this, young man?" said the Archer; "how came you to have committed such an offence?"

"As I desire your protection," answered Durward, "I will tell you the truth as if I were at confession. I saw a man struggling on the tree, and I went to cut him down out of mere humanity. I thought neither of fleur-de-lys nor of clove-gilliflower, and had no more idea of offending the King of France than our Father the Pope."

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"What a murrain had you to do with the dead body, then?" said the Archer. "You'll see them hanging, in the rear of this gentleman, like grapes on every tree, and you will have enough to do in this country if you go a-gleaning after the hangman. However, I will not quit a countryman's cause if I can help it. —Hark ye, Master Marshals-man, you see this is entirely a mistake. You should have some compassion on so young a traveller. In our country at home he has not been accustomed to see such active proceedings as yours and your master's."

"Not for want of need of them, Signor Archer," said Petit-André, who returned at this moment. "Stand fast, Trois-Eschelles, for here comes the Provost-Marshal; we shall presently see how he will relish having his work taken out of his hand before it is finished."

"And in good time," said the Archer, "here come some of my comrades."

Accordingly, as the Provost Tristan rode up with his patrol on one side of the little hill which was the scene of the altercation, four or five Scottish Archers came as hastily up on the other, and at their head the Balafré himself.

Upon this urgency, Lesly showed none of that indifference towards his nephew of which Quentin had in his heart accused him; for he no sooner saw his comrade and Durward standing upon their defence, than he exclaimed, "Cunningham, I thank thee.—Gentlemen—comrades, lend me your aid—It is a young Scottish gentleman—my nephew—Lindesay—Guthrie—Tyrie, draw, and strike in!"

There was now every prospect of a desperate scuffle between the parties, who were not so disproportioned in numbers, but that the better arms of the Scottish cavaliers gave them an equal chance of victory. But the Provost-Marshal, either doubting the issue of the conflict, or aware that it would be disagreeable to the King, made a sign to his followers to forbear from violence, while he demanded of Balafré, who now put himself forward as the head of the other party, "What he, a cavalier of the King's Body Guard, purposed by opposing the execution of a criminal?"

"I deny that I do so," answered the Balafré—"Saint Martin! there is, I think, some difference between the execution of a criminal, and the slaughter of my own nephew?"

"Your nephew may be a criminal as well as another, Signor,"

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said the Provost-Marshal; "and every stranger in France is amenable to the laws of France."

"Yes, but we have privileges, we Scottish Archers," said Balafré; "have we not, comrades?"

"Yes, yes," they all exclaimed together. "Privileges—privileges! Long live King Louis—long live the bold Balafré—long live the Scottish Guard—and death to all who would infringe our privileges!"

"Take reason with you, gentlemen cavaliers," said the Provost-Marshal; "consider my commission."

"We will have no reason at your hand," said Cunningham; "our own officers shall do us reason. We will be judged by the King's grace, or by our own Captain, now that the Lord High Constable is not in presence."

"And we will be hanged by none," said Lindesay, "but Sandie Wilson, the auld Marshals-man of our ain body."

"It would be a positive cheating of Sandie, who is as honest a man as ever tied noose upon hemp, did we give way to any other proceeding," said the Balafré. "Were I to be hanged myself, no other should tie tippet about my craig."

"But hear ye," said the Provost-Marshal, "this young fellow belongs not to you, and cannot share what you call your privileges."

"What we *call* our privileges, all shall admit to be such," said Cunningham.

"We will not hear them questioned!" was the universal cry of the Archers.

"Ye are mad, my masters," said Tristan l'Hermite—"No one disputes your privileges; but this youth is not one of you."

"He is *my* nephew," said the Balafré, with a triumphant air.

"But no Archer of the Guard, I think," retorted Tristan l'Hermite.

The Archers looked on each other in some uncertainty.

"Stand to it yet, comrade," whispered Cunningham to Balafré—"Say he is engaged with us."

"Saint Martin! you say well, fair countryman," answered Lesly; and raising his voice, swore that he had that day enrolled his kinsman as one of his own retinue.

This declaration was a decisive argument.

"It is well, gentlemen," said the Provost Tristan, who was

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aware of the King's nervous apprehension of disaffection creeping in among his Guards—"You know, as you say, your privileges, and it is not my duty to have brawls with the King's Guards, if it is to be avoided. But I will report this matter for the King's own decision; and I would have you to be aware, that, in doing so, I act more mildly than perhaps my duty warrants me."

So saying, he put his troop into motion, while the Archers, remaining on the spot, held a hasty consultation what was next to be done.

"We must report the matter to Lord Crawford, our Captain, in the first place, and have the young fellow's name put on the roll."

"But, gentlemen, and my worthy friends and preservers," said Quentin, with some hesitation, "I have not yet determined whether to take service with you or no."

"Then settle in your own mind," said his uncle, "whether you choose to do so, or be hanged—for I promise you, that, nephew of mine as you are, I see no other chance of your 'scaping the gallows."

This was an unanswerable argument, and reduced Quentin at once to acquiesce in what he might have otherwise considered as no very agreeable proposal; but the recent escape from the halter which had been actually around his neck, would probably have reconciled him to a worse alternative than was proposed.

"He must go home with us to our caserne," said Cunningham; "there is no safety for him out of our bounds, whilst these man-hunters are prowling about."

"May I not then abide for this night at the hostelry, where I breakfasted, fair uncle?" said the youth—thinking, perhaps, like many a new recruit, that even a single night of freedom was something gained.

"Yes, fair nephew," answered his uncle, ironically, "that we may have the pleasure of fishing you out of some canal or moat, or perhaps out of a loop of the Loire, knit up in a sack, for the greater convenience of swimming—for that is like to be the end on't—The Provost-Marshal smiled on us when we parted," continued he, addressing Cunningham, "and that is a sign his thoughts were dangerous."

"I care not for his danger," said Cunningham; "such game

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as we are beyond his bird-bolts. But I would have thee tell the whole to the Devil's Oliver, who is always a good friend to the Scottish Guard, and will see Father Louis before the Provost can, for he is to shave him to-morrow."

"But hark you," said Balafré, "it is ill going to Oliver empty-handed, and I am as bare as the birch in December."

"So are we all," said Cunningham—"Oliver must not scruple to take our Scottish words for once. We will make up something handsome among us against the next pay-day; and if *he* expects to share, let me tell you, the pay-day will come about all the sooner."

"And now for the Chateau," said Balafré; "and my nephew shall tell us by the way how he brought the Provost-Marshal on his shoulders, that we may know how to frame our report both to Crawford and Oliver."*

* Note D. Gipsies or Bohemians.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

THE ENROLMENT.

Justice of Peace.—Here, hand me down the Statute—
read the articles—
Swear, kiss the book—subscribe, and be a hero;
Drawing a portion from the public stock
For deeds of valour to be done hereafter—
Sixpence per day, subsistence and arrears.

THE RECRUITING OFFICER.

AN attendant upon the Archers having been dismounted, Quentin Durward was accommodated with his horse, and, in company of his martial countrymen, rode at a round pace towards the Castle of Plessis, about to become, although on his own part involuntarily, an inhabitant of that gloomy fortress, the outside of which had, that morning, struck him with so much surprise.

In the meanwhile, in answer to his uncle's repeated interrogations, he gave him an exact account of the accident which had that morning brought him into so much danger. Although he himself saw nothing in his narrative save what was affecting, he found it was received with much laughter by his escort.

"And yet it is no good jest either," said his uncle, "for what,

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in the devil's name, could lead the senseless boy to meddle with the body of a cursed misbelieving Jewish Moorish pagan?"

"Had he quarrelled with the Marshals-men about a pretty wench, as Michael of Moffat did, there had been more sense in it," said Cunningham.

"But I think it touches our honour, that Tristan and his people pretend to confound our Scottish bonnets with these pilfering vagabonds' *tocques* and *turbands*, as they call them," said Lindesay—"If they have not eyes to see the difference, they must be taught by rule of hand. But it's my belief, Tristan but pretends to mistake, that he may snap up the kindly Scots that come over to see their kinsfolks."

"May I ask, kinsman," said Quentin, "what sort of people these are of whom you speak?"

"In troth you may ask," said his uncle, "but I know not, fair nephew, who is able to answer you. Not I, I am sure, although I know, it may be, as much as other people; but they have appeared in this land within a year or two, just as a flight of locusts might do."*

"Ay," said Lindesay, "and Jacques Bonhomme (that is our name for the peasant, young man,—you will learn our way of talk in time),—honest Jacques, I say, cares little what wind either brings them or the locusts, so he but knows any gale that would carry them away again."

"Do they do so much evil?" asked the young man.

"Evil?—why, boy, they are heathens, or Jews, or Mahommedans at the least, and neither worship Our Lady nor the Saints"—(crossing himself)—"and steal what they can lay hands on, and sing, and tell fortunes," added Cunningham.

"And they say there are some goodly wenches amongst these women," said Guthrie; "but Cunningham knows that best."

"How, brother!" said Cunningham; "I trust ye mean me no reproach?"

"I am sure I said ye none," answered Guthrie.

"I will be judged by the company," said Cunningham.—"Ye said as much as that I, a Scottish gentleman, and living within pale of holy Church, had a fair friend among these offscourings of Heathenesse."

"Nay, nay," said Balafré, "he did but jest—We will have no quarrels among comrades."

* See Note D.

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"We must have no such jesting then," said Cunningham, murmuring, as if he had been speaking to his own beard.

"Be there such vagabonds in other lands than France?" said Lindesay.

"Ay, in good sooth are there—tribes of them have appeared in Germany, and in Spain, and in England," answered Balafré. "By the blessing of good Saint Andrew, Scotland is free of them yet."

"Scotland," said Cunningham, "is too cold a country for locusts, and too poor a country for thieves."

"Or perhaps John Highlander will suffer no thieves to thrive there but his own," said Guthrie.

"I let you all know," said Balafré, "that I come from the Braes of Angus, and have gentle Highland kin in Glen-isla, and I will not have the Highlanders slandered."

"You will not deny that they are cattle-lifters?" said Guthrie.

"To drive a spreagh, or so, is no thievery," said Balafré, "and that I will maintain when and how you dare."

"For shame, comrade," said Cunningham; "who quarrels now?—the young man should not see such mad misconstruction. —Come, here we are at the Chateau. I will bestow a runlet of wine to have a rouse in friendship, and drink to Scotland, Highland and Lowland both, if you will meet me at dinner at my quarters."

"Agreed—agreed," said Balafré; "and I will bestow another to wash away unkindness, and to drink a health to my nephew on his first entrance to our corps."

At their approach, the wicket was opened, and the drawbridge fell. One by one they entered; but when Quentin appeared, the sentinels crossed their pikes, and commanded him to stand, while bows were bent, and harquebusses aimed at him from the walls, a rigour of vigilance used, notwithstanding that the young stranger came in company of a party of the garrison, nay, of the very body which furnished the sentinels who were then upon duty.

Le Balafré, who had remained by his nephew's side on purpose, gave the necessary explanations, and, after some considerable hesitation and delay, the youth was conveyed under a strong guard to the Lord Crawford's apartment.

This Scottish nobleman was one of the last relics of the gallant band of Scottish lords and knights who had so long

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and so truly served Charles VI. in those bloody wars which decided the independence of the French crown, and the expulsion of the English. He had fought, when a boy, abreast with Douglas and with Buchan, had ridden beneath the banner of the Maid of Arc, and was perhaps one of the last of those associates of Scottish chivalry who had so willingly drawn their swords for the *fleur-de-lys*, against their "auld enemies of England." Changes which had taken place in the Scottish kingdom, and perhaps his having become habituated to French climate and manners, had induced the old Baron to resign all thoughts of returning to his native country, the rather that the high office which he held in the household of Louis, and his own frank and loyal character, had gained a considerable ascendency over the King, who, though in general no ready believer in human virtue or honour, trusted and confided in those of the Lord Crawford, and allowed him the greater influence, because he was never known to interfere excepting in matters which concerned his charge.

Balafré and Cunningham followed Durward and the guard to the apartment of their officer, by whose dignified appearance, as well as with the respect paid to him by these proud soldiers, who seemed to respect no one else, the young man was much and strongly impressed.

Lord Crawford was tall, and through advanced age had become gaunt and thin; yet retaining in his sinews the strength, at least, if not the elasticity, of youth, he was able to endure the weight of his armour during a march as well as the youngest man who rode in his band. He was hard-favoured, with a scarred and weatherbeaten countenance, and an eye that had looked upon death as his playfellow in thirty pitched battles, but which nevertheless expressed a calm contempt of danger, rather than the ferocious courage of a mercenary soldier. His tall erect figure was at present wrapped in a loose chamber-gown, secured around him by his buff belt, in which was suspended his richly-hilted poniard. He had round his neck the collar and badge of the order of Saint Michael. He sat upon a couch covered with deer's hide, and with spectacles on his nose (then a recent invention), was labouring to read a huge manuscript called the *Rosier de la Guerre*, a code of military and civil policy which Louis had compiled for the benefit of his son

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the Dauphin, and upon which he was desirous to have the opinion of the experienced Scottish warrior.

Lord Crawford laid his book somewhat peevishly aside upon the entrance of these unexpected visitors, and demanded, in his broad national dialect, "What, in the foul fiend's name, they lacked now?"

Le Balafré, with more respect than perhaps he would have shown to Louis himself, stated at full length the circumstances in which his nephew was placed, and humbly requested his Lordship's protection. Lord Crawford listened very attentively. He could not but smile at the simplicity with which the youth had interfered in behalf of the hanged criminal, but he shook his head at the account which he received of the ruffle betwixt the Scottish Archers and the Provost-Marshal's guard.*

"How often," he said, "will you bring me such ill-winded pirns to ravel out? How often must I tell you, and especially both you, Ludovic Lesly, and you, Archie Cunningham, that the foreign soldier should bear himself modestly and decorously towards the people of the country, if you would not have the whole dogs of the town at your heels? However, if you must have a bargain,† I would rather it were with that loon of a Provost than any one else; and I blame you less for this onslaught than for other frays that you have made, Ludovic, for it was but natural and kind-like to help your young kinsman. This simple bairn must come to no skaith neither; so give me the roll of the company yonder down from the shelf, and we will even add his name to the troop, that he may enjoy the privileges."

"May it please your Lordship,"—said Durward——

"Is the lad crazed!" exclaimed his uncle—"Would you speak to his Lordship, without a question asked?"

"Patience, Ludovic," said Lord Crawford, "and let us hear what the bairn has to say."

* Such disputes between the Scots Guards, and the other constituted authorities of the ordinary military corps, often occurred. In 1474, two Scotsmen had been concerned in robbing John Pensart, a fishmonger, of a large sum of money. They were accordingly apprehended by Philip du Four, Provost, with some of his followers. But ere they could lodge one of them, called Mortimer, in the prison of the Chastellet, they were attacked by two Archers of the King's Scottish Guard, who rescued the prisoner.—See Chronique de Jean de Troyes, at the said year, 1474.

† A quarrel, videlicet.

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"Only this, if it may please your Lordship," replied Quentin, "that I told my uncle formerly I had some doubts about entering this service. I have now to say that they are entirely removed, since I have seen the noble and experienced commander under whom I am to serve; for there is authority in your look."

"Weel said, my bairn," said the old Lord, not insensible to the compliment; "we have had some experience, had God sent us grace to improve by it, both in service and in command. There you stand, Quentin, in our honourable corps of Scottish Body-guards, as esquire to your uncle, and serving under his lance. I trust you will do well, for you should be a right man-at-arms, if all be good that is upcome,* and you are come of a gentle kindred.—Ludovic, you will see that your kinsman follow his exercise diligently, for we will have spears breaking one of these days."

"By my hilts, and I am glad of it, my Lord—this peace makes cowards of us all. I myself feel a sort of decay of spirit, closed up in this cursed dungeon of a Castle."

"Well, a bird whistled in my ear," continued Lord Crawford, "that the old banner will be soon dancing in the field again."

"I will drink a cup the deeper this evening to that very tune," said Balafré.

"Thou wilt drink to any tune," said Lord Crawford; "and I fear me, Ludovic, you will drink a bitter browst of your own brewing one day."

Lesly, a little abashed, replied, "that it had not been his wont for many a day; but his Lordship knew the use of the company, to have a carouse to the health of a new comrade."

"True," said the old leader, "I had forgot the occasion. I will send a few stoups of wine to assist your carouse; but let it be over by sunset. And, hark ye—let the soldiers for duty be carefully pricked off; and see that none of them be more or less partakers of your debauch."

"Your Lordship shall be lawfully obeyed," said Ludovic, "and your health duly remembered."

"Perhaps," said Lord Crawford, "I may look in myself upon your mirth—just to see that all is carried decently."

"Your Lordship shall be most dearly welcome," said

* That is, if your courage corresponds with your personal appearance.

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Ludovic; and the whole party retreated in high spirits to prepare for their military banquet, to which Lesly invited about a score of his comrades, who were pretty much in the habit of making their mess together.

A soldier's festival is generally a very extempore affair, providing there is enough of meat and drink to be had; but, on the present occasion, Ludovic bustled about to procure some better wine than ordinary; observing, that "the old Lord was the surest gear in their aught, and that, while he preached sobriety to them, he himself, after drinking at the royal table as much wine as he could honestly come by, never omitted any creditable opportunity to fill up the evening over the wine-pot; so you must prepare, comrades," he said, "to hear the old histories of the battles of Vernoil and Beaugé."*

The Gothic apartment in which they generally met was, therefore, hastily put into the best order; their grooms were despatched to collect green rushes to spread upon the floor; and banners, under which the Scottish Guard had marched to battle, or which they had taken from the enemies' ranks, were displayed, by way of tapestry, over the table, and around the walls of the chamber.

The next point was, to invest the young recruit as hastily as possible with the dress and appropriate arms of the Guard, that he might appear in every respect the sharer of its important privileges, in virtue of which, and by the support of his countrymen, he might freely brave the power and the displeasure of the Provost-Marshal—although the one was known to be as formidable as the other was unrelenting.

The banquet was joyous in the highest degree; and the guests gave vent to the whole current of their national partiality on receiving into their ranks a recruit from their beloved fatherland. Old Scottish songs were sung, old tales of Scottish heroes told—the achievements of their fathers, and the scenes in which they were wrought, were recalled to mind: and, for a time, the rich plains of Touraine seemed converted into the mountainous and sterile regions of Caledonia.

When their enthusiasm was at high flood, and each was

* In both these battles, the Scottish auxiliaries of France, under Stewart, Earl of Buchan, were distinguished. At Beaugé they were victorious, killing the Duke of Clarence, Henry Vth's brother, and cutting off his army. At Vernoil they were defeated, and nearly extirpated.

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endeavouring to say something to enhance the dear remembrance of Scotland, it received a new impulse from the arrival of Lord Crawford, who, as Le Balafré had well prophesied, sat as it were on thorns at the royal board, until an opportunity occurred of making his escape to the revelry of his own countrymen. A chair of state had been reserved for him at the upper end of the table; for, according to the manners of the age, and the constitution of that body, although their leader and commander under the King and High Constable, the members of the corps (as we should now say, the privates), being all ranked as noble by birth, their Captain sat with them at the same table without impropriety, and might mingle when he chose in their festivity, without derogation from his dignity as commander.

At present, however, Lord Crawford declined occupying the seat prepared for him, and bidding them "hold themselves merry," stood looking on the revel with a countenance which seemed greatly to enjoy it.

"Let him alone," whispered Cunningham to Lindesay, as the latter offered the wine to their noble Captain, "let him alone—hurry no man's cattle—let him take it of his own accord."

In fact, the old Lord, who at first smiled, shook his head, and placed the untasted wine-cup before him, began presently, as if it were in absence of mind, to sip a little of the contents, and in doing so, fortunately recollected that it would be ill luck did he not drink a draught to the health of the gallant lad who had joined them this day. The pledge was filled, and answered, as may well be supposed, with many a joyous shout, when the old leader proceeded to acquaint them that he had possessed Master Oliver with an account of what had passed that day: "And as," he said, "the scraper of chins hath no great love for the stretcher of throats, he has joined me in obtaining from the King an order, commanding the Provost to suspend all proceedings, under whatever pretence, against Quentin Durward; and to respect, on all occasions, the privileges of the Scottish Guard."

Another shout broke forth, the cups were again filled till the wine sparkled on the brim, and there was an acclaim to the health of the noble Lord Crawford, the brave conservator of the privileges and rights of his countrymen. The good old Lord could not but in courtesy do reason to this pledge also, and

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gliding into the ready chair, as it were, without reflecting what he was doing, he caused Quentin to come up beside him, and assailed him with many more questions concerning the state of Scotland, and the great families there, than he was well able to answer; while ever and anon, in the course of his queries, the good Lord kissed the wine-cup by way of parenthesis, remarking, that sociality became Scottish gentlemen, but that young men, like Quentin, ought to practise it cautiously, lest it might degenerate into excess; upon which occasion he uttered many excellent things, until his own tongue, although employed in the praises of temperance, began to articulate something thicker than usual. It was now that, while the military ardour of the company augmented with each flagon which they emptied, Cunningham called on them to drink the speedy hoisting of the *Oriflamme* (the royal banner of France).

"And a breeze of Burgundy to fan it!" echoed Lindesay.

"With all the soul that is left in this worn body do I accept the pledge, bairns," echoed Lord Crawford; "and as old as I am, I may see it flutter yet. Hark ye, my mates" (for wine had made him something communicative), "ye are all true servants to the French crown, and wherefore should ye not know there is an envoy come from Duke Charles of Burgundy, with a message of an angry favour."

"I saw the Count of Crèvecœur's equipage, horses and retinue," said another of the guests, "down at the inn yonder, at the Mulberry Grove. They say the King will not admit him into the Castle."

"Now, Heaven send him an ungracious answer!" said Guthrie; "but what is it he complains of?"

"A world of grievances upon the frontier," said Lord Crawford; "and latterly, that the King hath received under his protection a lady of his land, a young Countess, who hath fled from Dijon, because, being a ward of the Duke, he would have her marry his favourite, Campo-basso."

"And hath she actually come hither alone, my lord?" said Lindesay.

"Nay, not altogether alone, but with the old Countess, her kinswoman, who hath yielded to her cousin's wishes in this matter."

"And will the King," said Cunningham, "he being the Duke's feudal sovereign, interfere between the Duke and his

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ward, over whom Charles hath the same right, which, were he himself dead, the King would have over the heiress of Burgundy?"

"The King will be ruled, as he is wont, by rules of policy; and you know," continued Crawford, "that he hath not publicly received these ladies, nor placed them under the protection of his daughters, the Lady of Beaujeu, or the Princess Joan, so, doubtless, he will be guided by circumstances. He is our Master—but it is no treason to say, he will chase with the hounds, and run with the hare, with any Prince in Christendom."

"But the Duke of Burgundy understands no such doubling," said Cunningham.

"No," answered the old Lord; "and, therefore, it is likely to make work between them."

"Well—Saint Andrew farther the fray!" said Le Balafré. "I had it foretold me ten, ay, twenty years since, that I was to make the fortune of my house by marriage. Who knows what may happen, if once we come to fight for honour and ladies' love, as they do in the old romaunts?"

"*Thou* name ladies' love, with such a trench in thy visage!" said Guthrie.

"As well not love at all, as love a Bohemian woman of Heathenesse," retorted Le Balafré.

"Hold there, comrades," said Lord Crawford; "no tilting with sharp weapons, no jesting with keen scoffs—friends all. And for the lady, she is too wealthy to fall to a poor Scottish lord, or I would put in my own claim, fourscore years and all, or not very far from it. But here is her health, nevertheless, for they say she is a lamp of beauty."

"I think I saw her," said another soldier, "when I was upon guard this morning at the inner barrier; but she was more like a dark lantern than a lamp, for she and another were brought into the Chateau in close litters."

"Shame! shame! Arnot!" said Lord Crawford; "a soldier on duty should say nought of what he sees. Besides," he added after a pause, his own curiosity prevailing over the show of discipline which he had thought it necessary to exert, "why should these litters contain this very same Countess Isabelle de Croye?"

"Nay, my Lord," replied Arnot, "I know nothing of it save

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this, that my coutelier was airing my horses in the road to the village, and fell in with Doguin the muleteer, who brought back the litters to the inn, for they belong to the fellow of the Mulberry Grove yonder—he of the Fleur-de-Lys, I mean—and so Doguin asked Saunders Steed to take a cup of wine, as they were acquainted, which he was no doubt willing enough to do"——

"No doubt—no doubt," said the old Lord; "it is a thing I wish were corrected among you, gentlemen; but all your grooms, and couteliers, and jackmen, as we should call them in Scotland, are but too ready to take a cup of wine with any one—It is a thing perilous in war, and must be amended. But, Andrew Arnot, this is a long tale of yours, and we will cut it with a drink; as the Highlander says, *Skeoch doch nan skial;** and that's good Gaelic.—Here is to the Countess Isabelle of Croye, and a better husband to her than Campo-basso, who is a base Italian cullion!—And now, Andrew Arnot, what said the muleteer to this yeoman of thine?"

"Why, he told him in secrecy, if it please your Lordship," continued Arnot, "that these two ladies whom he had presently before convoyed up to the Castle in the close litters, were great ladies, who had been living in secret at his master's house for some days, and that the King had visited them more than once very privately, and had done them great honour; and that they had fled up to the Castle, as he believed, for fear of the Count de Crèvecœur, the Duke of Burgundy's ambassador, whose approach was just announced by an advanced courier."

"Ay, Andrew, come you there to me?" said Guthrie; "then I will be sworn it was the Countess whose voice I heard singing to the lute, as I came even now through the inner court—the sound came from the bay-windows of the Dauphin's Tower; and such melody was there as no one ever heard before in the Castle of Plessis of the Park. By my faith, I thought it was the music of the Fairy Melusina's making. There I stood—though I knew your board was covered, and that you were all impatient—there I stood like"——

"Like an ass, Johnny Guthrie," said his commander; "thy long nose smelling the dinner, thy long ears hearing the music, and thy short discretion not enabling thee to decide which of

* "Cut a tale with a drink;" an expression used when a man preaches over his liquor, as *bons vivans* say in England.

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them thou didst prefer.—Hark! is that not the Cathedral bell tolling to vespers?—Sure it cannot be that time yet? The mad old sexton has toll'd even-song an hour too soon."

"In faith, the bell rings but too justly the hour," said Cunningham; "yonder the sun is sinking on the west side of the fair plain."

"Ay," said the Lord Crawford, "is it even so?—Well, lads, we must live within compass—Fair and soft goes far—slow fire makes sweet malt—to be merry and wise is a sound proverb.—One other rouse to the weal of old Scotland, and then each man to his duty."

The parting-cup was emptied, and the guests dismissed—the stately Baron taking the Balafré's arm, under pretence of giving him some instructions concerning his nephew, but, perhaps, in reality, lest his own lofty pace should seem to the public eye less steady than became his rank and high command. A serious countenance did he bear as he passed through the two courts which separated his lodging from the festal chamber, and solemn as the gravity of a hogshead was the farewell caution, with which he prayed Ludovic to attend his nephew's motions, especially in the matters of wenches and wine-cups.

Meanwhile, not a word that was spoken concerning the beautiful Countess Isabelle had escaped the young Durward, who, conducted into a small cabin, which he was to share with his uncle's page, made his new and lowly abode the scene of much high musing. The reader will easily imagine that the young soldier should build a fine romance on such a foundation as the supposed, or rather the assumed, identification of the Maiden of the Turret, to whose lay he had listened with so much interest, and the fair cup-bearer of Maitre Pierre, with a fugitive Countess, of rank and wealth, flying from the pursuit of a hated lover, the favourite of an oppressive guardian, who abused his feudal power. There was an interlude in Quentin's vision concerning Maitre Pierre, who seemed to exercise such authority even over the formidable officer from whose hands he had that day, with much difficulty, made his escape. At length the youth's reveries, which had been respected by little Will Harper, the companion of his cell, were broken in upon by the return of his uncle, who commanded Quentin to bed, that he might arise betimes in the morning, and attend him to his Majesty's antechamber, to which he was called by his hour of duty, along with five of his comrades.

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CHAPTER EIGHTH.

THE ENVOY.

Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France
For ere thou canst report I will be there,
The thunder of my cannon shall be heard—
So, hence! Be thou the trumpet of our wrath.

KING JOHN.

HAD sloth been a temptation by which Durward was easily beset, the noise with which the *caserne* of the guards resounded after the first toll of primes, had certainly banished the syren from his couch; but the discipline of his father's tower, and of the convent of Aberbrothick, had taught him to start with the dawn; and he did on his clothes gaily, amid the sounding of bugles and the clash of armour, which announced the change of the vigilant guards—some of whom were returning to barracks after their nightly duty, whilst some were marching out to that of the morning—and others, again, amongst whom was his uncle, were arming for immediate attendance upon the person of Louis. Quentin Durward soon put on, with the feelings of so young a man on such an occasion, the splendid dress and arms appertaining to his new situation; and his uncle, who looked with great accuracy and interest to see that he was completely fitted out in every respect, did not conceal his satisfaction at the improvement which had been thus made in his nephew's appearance. "If thou dost prove as faithful and bold as thou art well-favoured, I shall have in thee one of the handsomest and best esquires in the Guard, which cannot but be an honour to thy mother's family. Follow me to the presence-chamber; and see thou keep close at my shoulder."

So saying, he took up a partisan, large, weighty, and beautifully inlaid and ornamented, and directing his nephew to assume a lighter weapon of a similar description, they proceeded to the inner court of the palace, where their comrades, who were to form the guard of the interior apartments, were already drawn up, and under arms—the squires each standing behind their masters, to whom they thus formed a second rank. Here were also in attendance many yeomen-prickers, with gallant

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horses and noble dogs, on which Quentin looked with such inquisitive delight, that his uncle was obliged more than once to remind him that the animals were not there for his private amusement, but for the King's, who had a strong passion for the chase, one of the few inclinations which he indulged, even when coming in competition with his course of policy; being so strict a protector of the game in the royal forests, that it was currently said, you might kill a man with greater impunity than a stag.

On a signal given, the Guards were put into motion by the command of Le Balafré, who acted as officer upon the occasion; and, after some minutiæ of word and signal, which all served to show the extreme and punctilious jealousy with which their duty was performed, they marched into the hall of audience, where the King was immediately expected.

New as Quentin was to scenes of splendour, the effect of that which was now before him rather disappointed the expectations which he had formed of the brilliancy of a Court. There were household officers, indeed, richly attired; there were guards gallantly armed, and there were domestics of various degrees: But he saw none of the ancient counsellors of the kingdom, none of the high officers of the crown, heard none of the names which in those days sounded an alarum to chivalry; saw none either of those generals or leaders, who, possessed of the full prime of manhood, were the strength of France, or of the more youthful and fiery nobles, those early aspirants after honour, who were her pride. The jealous habits—the reserved manners—the deep and artful policy of the King, had estranged this splendid circle from the throne, and they were only called around it upon certain stated and formal occasions, when they went reluctantly, and returned joyfully, as the animals in the fable are supposed to have approached and left the den of the lion.

The very few persons who seemed to be there in the character of counsellors, were mean-looking men, whose countenances sometimes expressed sagacity, but whose manners showed they were called into a sphere for which their previous education and habits had qualified them but indifferently. One or two persons, however, did appear to Durward to possess a more noble mien, and the strictness of the present duty was not such as to prevent his uncle communicating the names of those whom he thus distinguished

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With the Lord Crawford, who was in attendance, dressed in the rich habit of his office, and holding a leading staff of silver in his hand, Quentin, as well as the reader was already acquainted. Among others who seemed of quality, the most remarkable was the Count de Dunois, the son of that celebrated Dunois, known by the name of the Bastard of Orleans, who, fighting under the banner of Jeanne d'Arc, acted such a distinguished part in liberating France from the English yoke. His son well supported the high renown which had descended to him from such an honoured source; and, notwithstanding his connection with the royal family, and his hereditary popularity both with the nobles and the people, Dunois had, upon all occasions, manifested such an open, frank loyalty of character, that he seemed to have escaped all suspicion, even on the part of the jealous Louis, who loved to see him near his person, and sometimes even called him to his councils. Although accounted complete in all the exercises of chivalry, and possessed of much of the character of what was then termed a perfect knight, the person of the Count was far from being a model of romantic beauty. He was under the common size, though very strongly built, and his legs rather curved outwards, into that make which is more convenient for horseback, than elegant in a pedestrian. His shoulders were broad, his hair black, his complexion swarthy, his arms remarkably long and nervous. The features of his countenance were irregular, even to ugliness; yet, after all, there was an air of conscious worth and nobility about the Count de Dunois, which stamped at the first glance the character of the high-born nobleman, and the undaunted soldier. His mien was bold and upright, his step free and manly, and the harshness of his countenance was dignified by a glance like an eagle, and a frown like a lion. His dress was a hunting suit, rather sumptuous than gay, and he acted on most occasions as Grand Huntsman, though we are not inclined to believe that he actually held the office.

Upon the arm of his relation Dunois, walking with a step so slow and melancholy, that he seemed to rest on his kinsman and supporter, came Louis Duke of Orleans, the first Prince of the blood royal (afterwards King, by the name of Louis XII.), and to whom the guards and attendants rendered their homage as such. The jealously-watched object of Louis's suspicions, this Prince, who, failing the King's offspring, was heir to the king-

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dom, was not suffered to absent himself from Court, and, while residing there, was alike denied employment and countenance. The dejection which his degraded and almost captive state naturally impressed on the deportment of this unfortunate Prince, was at this moment greatly increased by his consciousness that the King meditated, with respect to him, one of the most cruel and unjust actions which a tyrant could commit, by compelling him to give his hand to the Princess Joan of France, the younger daughter of Louis, to whom he had been contracted in infancy, but whose deformed person rendered the insisting upon such an agreement an act of abominable rigour.*

The exterior of this unhappy Prince was in no respect distinguished by personal advantages; and in mind he was of a gentle, mild, and beneficent disposition, qualities which were visible even through the veil of extreme dejection, with which his natural character was at present obscured. Quentin observed that the Duke studiously avoided even looking at the Royal Guards, and when he returned their salute, that he kept his eyes bent on the ground, as if he feared the King's jealousy might have construed that gesture of ordinary courtesy, as arising from the purpose of establishing a separate and personal interest among them.

Very different was the conduct of the proud Cardinal and Prelate, John of Balue, the favourite minister of Louis for the time, whose rise and character bore as close a resemblance to that of Wolsey, as the difference betwixt the crafty and politic Louis and the headlong and rash Henry VIII. of England would permit. The former had raised his minister from the lowest rank, to the dignity, or at least to the emoluments, of Grand Almoner of France, loaded him with benefices, and obtained for him the hat of a cardinal; and although he was too cautious to repose in the ambitious Balue the unbounded power and trust which Henry placed in Wolsey, yet he was more influenced by him than by any other of his avowed counsellors. The Cardinal, accordingly, had not escaped the error incidental to those who are suddenly raised to power from an obscure situation, for he entertained a strong persuasion, dazzled doubtless by the suddenness of his elevation, that his capacity was equal to intermeddling with affairs of every kind, even those most foreign to his profession and studies. Tall and ungainly

* See note, p. 135.

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in his person, he affected gallantry and admiration of the fair sex, although his manners rendered his pretensions absurd, and his profession marked them as indecorous. Some male or female flatterer had, in evil hour, possessed him with the idea that there was much beauty of contour in a pair of huge substantial legs, which he had derived from his father, a car-man of Limoges, or, according to other authorities, a miller of Verdun; and with this idea he had become so infatuated, that he always had his cardinal's robes a little looped up on one side, that the sturdy proportion of his limbs might not escape observation. As he swept through the stately apartment in his crimson dress and rich cope, he stooped repeatedly to look at the arms and appointments of the cavaliers on guard, asked them several questions in an authoritative tone, and took upon him to censure some of them for what he termed irregularities of discipline, in language to which these experienced soldiers dared no reply, although it was plain they listened to it with impatience and with contempt.

"Is the King aware," said Dunois to the Cardinal, "that the Burgundian Envoy is peremptory in demanding an audience?"

"He is," answered the Cardinal; "and here, as I think, comes the all-sufficient Oliver Dain,* to let us know the royal pleasure."

As he spoke, a remarkable person, who then divided the favour of Louis with the proud Cardinal himself, entered from the inner apartment, but without any of that important and consequential demeanour which marked the full-blown dignity of the churchman. On the contrary, this was a little, pale, meagre man, whose black silk jerkin and hose, without either coat, cloak, or cassock, formed a dress ill qualified to set off to advantage a very ordinary person. He carried a silver basin in his hand, and a napkin flung over his arm indicated his menial capacity. His visage was penetrating and quick, although he endeavoured to banish such expression from his features, by keeping his eyes fixed on the ground, while, with the stealthy and quiet pace of a cat, he seemed modestly rather to glide than to walk through the apartment. But though modesty may easily obscure worth, it cannot hide court-favour; and all

* Oliver's name, or nickname, was Le Diable, which was bestowed on him by public hatred, in exchange for Le Daim, or Le Dain. He was originally the King's barber, but afterwards a favourite counsellor.

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attempts to steal unperceived through the presence-chamber were vain, on the part of one known to have such possession of the King's ear, as had been attained by his celebrated barber and groom of the chamber, Oliver le Dain, called sometimes Oliver le Mauvais, and sometimes Oliver le Diable, epithets derived from the unscrupulous cunning with which he assisted in the execution of the schemes of his master's tortuous policy. At present he spoke earnestly for a few moments with the Count de Dunois, who instantly left the chamber, while the tonsor glided quietly back towards the royal apartment, whence he had issued, every one giving place to him; which civility he only acknowledged by the most humble inclination of the body, excepting in a very few instances, where he made one or two persons the subject of envy to all the other courtiers, by whispering a single word in their ear; and at the same time muttering something of the duties of his place, he escaped from their replies as well as from the eager solicitations of those who wished to attract his notice. Ludovic Lesly had the good fortune to be one of the individuals, who, on the present occasion, was favoured by Oliver with a single word, to assure him that his matter was fortunately terminated.

Presently afterwards he had another proof of the same agreeable tidings; for Quentin's old acquaintance, Tristan l'Hermite, the Provost-Marshal of the royal household, entered the apartment, and came straight to the place where Le Balafré was posted. This formidable officer's uniform, which was very rich, had only the effect of making his sinister countenance and bad mien more strikingly remarkable, and the tone which he meant for conciliatory, was like nothing so much as the growling of a bear. The import of his words, however, was more amicable than the voice in which they were pronounced. He regretted the mistake which had fallen between them on the preceding day, and observed it was owing to the Sieur Le Balafré's nephew not wearing the uniform of his corps, or announcing himself as belonging to it, which had led him into the error for which he now asked forgiveness.

Ludovic Lesly made the necessary reply, and as soon as Tristan had turned away, observed to his nephew, that they had now the distinction of having a mortal enemy from henceforward in the person of this dreaded officer. "But we are above his

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solde—a soldier," said he, "who does his duty, may laugh at the Provost-Marshal."

Quentin could not help being of his uncle's opinion, for, as Tristan parted from them, it was with the look of angry defiance which the bear casts upon the hunter whose spear has wounded him. Indeed, even when less strongly moved, the sullen eye of this official expressed a malevolence of purpose which made men shudder to meet his glance; and the thrill of the young Scot was the deeper and more abhorrent, that he seemed to himself still to feel on his shoulders the grasp of the two death-doing functionaries of this fatal officer.

Meanwhile, Oliver, after he had prowled around the room in the stealthy manner which we have endeavoured to describe,—all, even the highest officers making way for him, and loading him with their ceremonious attentions, which his modesty seemed desirous to avoid—again entered the inner apartment, the doors of which were presently thrown open, and King Louis entered the presence-chamber.

Quentin, like all others, turned his eyes upon him; and started so suddenly, that he almost dropped his weapon, when he recognised in the King of France, that silk-merchant, Maitre Pierre, who had been the companion of his morning walk. Singular suspicions respecting the real rank of this person had at different times crossed his thoughts; but this, the proved reality, was wilder than his wildest conjecture.

The stern look of his uncle, offended at this breach of the decorum of his office, recalled him to himself; but not a little was he astonished when the King, whose quick eye had at once discovered him, walked straight to the place where he was posted, without taking notice of any one else.—"So," he said, "young man, I am told you have been brawling on your first arrival in Touraine; but I pardon you, as it was chiefly the fault of a foolish old merchant, who thought your Caledonian blood required to be heated in the morning with *Vin de Beaune*. If I can find him, I will make him an example to those who debauch my Guards.—Balafré," he added, speaking to Lesly, "your kinsman is a fair youth, though a fiery. We love to cherish such spirits, and mean to make more than ever we did of the brave men who are around us. Let the year, day, hour, and minute of your nephew's birth be written down and given to Oliver Dain."

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Le Balafré bowed to the ground, and re-assumed his erect military position, as one who would show by his demeanour his promptitude to act in the King's quarrel or defence. Quentin, in the meantime, recovered from his first surprise, studied the King's appearance more attentively, and was surprised to find how differently he now construed his deportment and features than he had done at their first interview.

These were not much changed in exterior, for Louis, always a scorner of outward show, wore, on the present occasion, an old dark-blue hunting-dress, not much better than the plain burgher suit of the preceding day, and garnished with a huge rosary of ebony, which had been sent to him by no less a personage than the Grand Seignior, with an attestation that it had been used by a Coptic hermit on Mount Lebanon, a personage of profound sanctity. And instead of his cap with a single image, he now wore a hat, the band of which was garnished with at least a dozen of little paltry figures of saints stamped in lead. But those eyes, which, according to Quentin's former impression, only twinkled with the love of gain, had, now that they were known to be the property of an able and powerful monarch, a piercing and majestic glance; and those wrinkles on the brow, which he had supposed were formed during a long series of petty schemes of commerce, seemed now the furrows which sagacity had worn while toiling in meditation upon the fate of nations.

Presently after the King's appearance, the Princesses of France, with the ladies of their suite, entered the apartment. With the eldest, afterwards married to Peter of Bourbon, and known in French history by the name of the Lady of Beaujeau, our story has but little to do. She was tall, and rather handsome, possessed eloquence, talent, and much of her father's sagacity, who reposed great confidence in her, and loved her as well perhaps as he loved any one.

The younger sister, the unfortunate Joan, the destined bride of the Duke of Orleans, advanced timidly by the side of her sister, conscious of a total want of those external qualities which women are most desirous of possessing, or being thought to possess. She was pale, thin, and sickly in her complexion; her shape visibly bent to one side, and her gait so unequal that she might be called lame. A fine set of teeth, and eyes which were expressive of melancholy, softness, and resignation, with a quantity of light brown locks, were the only redeeming points which flattery

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itself could have dared to number, to counteract the general homeliness of her face and figure. To complete the picture, it was easy to remark, from the Princess's negligence in dress, and the timidity of her manner, that she had an unusual and distressing consciousness of her own plainness of appearance, and did not dare to make any of those attempts to mend by manners or by art what nature had left amiss, or in any other way to exert a power of pleasing. The King (who loved her not) stepped hastily to her as she entered.—"How now!" he said, "our world-contemning daughter—Are you robed for a hunting-party, or for the convent, this morning? Speak—answer."

"For which your highness pleases, sire," said the Princess, scarce raising her voice above her breath.

"Ay, doubtless, you would persuade me it is your desire to quit the Court, Joan, and renounce the world and its vanities.—Ha! maiden, wouldst thou have it thought that we, the first-born of Holy Church, would refuse our daughter to Heaven?—Our Lady and Saint Martin forbid we should refuse the offering, were it worthy of the altar, or were thy vocation in truth thitherward!"

So saying, the King crossed himself devoutly, looking, in the meantime, as appeared to Quentin, very like a cunning vassal, who was depreciating the merit of something which he was desirous to keep to himself, in order that he might stand excused for not offering it to his chief or superior. "Does he thus play the hypocrite with Heaven," thought Durward, "and sport with God and the Saints, as he may safely do with men, who dare not search his nature too closely?"

Louis meantime resumed, after a moment's mental devotion—"No, fair daughter, I and another know your real mind better—Ha! fair cousin of Orleans, do we not? Approach, fair sir, and lead this devoted vestal of ours to her horse."

Orleans started when the King spoke, and hastened to obey him; but with such precipitation of step, and confusion, that Louis called out, "Nay, cousin, rein your gallantry, and look before you—Why, what a headlong matter a gallant's haste is on some occasions!—You had well-nigh taken Anne's hand instead of her sister's.—Sir, must I give Joan's to you myself?"

The unhappy Prince looked up, and shuddered like a child, when forced to touch something at which it has instinctive horror—then making an effort, took the hand which the Princess neither gave nor yet withheld. As they stood, her cold damp

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fingers enclosed in his trembling hand, with their eyes looking on the ground, it would have been difficult to say which of these two youthful beings was rendered more utterly miserable—the Duke, who felt himself fettered to the object of his aversion by bonds which he durst not tear asunder, or the unfortunate young woman, who too plainly saw that she was an object of abhorrence to him, to gain whose kindness she would willingly have died.

"And now to horse, gentlemen and ladies—We will ourselves lead forth our daughter of Beaujeau," said the King; "and God's blessing and Saint Hubert's be on our morning's sport!"

"I am, I fear, doomed to interrupt it, Sire," said the Comte de Dunois—"the Burgundian Envoy is before the gates of the Castle, and demands an audience."

"*Demands* an audience, Dunois?" replied the King—"Did you not answer him, as we sent you word by Oliver, that we were not at leisure to see him to-day—and that to-morrow was the festival of Saint Martin, which, please Heaven, we would disturb by no earthly thoughts,—and that on the succeeding day we were designed for Amboise—but that we would not fail to appoint him as early an audience, when we returned, as our pressing affairs would permit?"

"All this I said," answered Dunois; "but yet, Sire"——

"*Pasques-dieu!* man, what is it that thus sticks in thy throat?" said the King. "This Burgundian's terms must have been hard of digestion."

"Had not my duty, your Grace's commands, and his character as an Envoy, restrained me," said Dunois, "he should have tried to digest them himself; for, by Our Lady of Orleans, I had more mind to have made him eat his own words, than to have brought them to your Majesty."

"Body of me, Dunois," said the King, "it is strange that thou, one of the most impatient fellows alive, shouldst have so little sympathy with the like infirmity in our blunt and fiery cousin, Charles of Burgundy. Why, man, I mind his blustering messages no more than the towers of this Castle regard the whistling of the north-east wind, which comes from Flanders, as well as this brawling Envoy."

"Know then, Sire," replied Dunois, "that the Count of Crèvecœur tarries below, with his retinue of pursuivants and

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trumpets, and says, that since your Majesty refuses him the audience which his master has instructed him to demand, upon matters of most pressing concern, he will remain there till midnight, and accost your Majesty at whatever hour you are pleased to issue from your Castle, whether for business, exercise, or devotion; and that no consideration, except the use of absolute force, shall compel him to desist from this resolution."

"He is a fool," said the King, with much composure. "Does the hot-headed Hainaulter think it any penance for a man of sense to remain for twenty-four hours quiet within the walls of his Castle, when he hath the affairs of a kingdom to occupy him? These impatient coxcombs think that all men, like themselves, are miserable, save when in saddle and stirrup. Let the dogs be put up, and well looked to, gentle Dunois—We will hold council to-day, instead of hunting."

"My Liege," answered Dunois, "you will not thus rid yourself of Crèvecœur; for his master's instructions are, that if he hath not this audience which he demands, he shall nail his gauntlet to the palisades before the Castle, in token of mortal defiance on the part of his master, shall renounce the Duke's fealty to France, and declare instant war."

"Ay," said Louis, without any perceptible alteration of voice, but frowning until his piercing dark eye became almost invisible under his shaggy eyebrows, "is it even so?—will our ancient vassal prove so masterful—our dear cousin treat us thus unkindly?—Nay, then, Dunois, we must unfold the *Oriflamme*, and cry *Dennis Montjoye!*"

"Marry and amen, and in a most happy hour!" said the martial Dunois; and the guards in the hall, unable to resist the same impulse, stirred each upon his post, so as to produce a low but distinct sound of clashing arms. The King cast his eye proudly round, and, for a moment, thought and looked like his heroic father.

But the excitement of the moment presently gave way to the host of political considerations, which, at that conjuncture, rendered an open breach with Burgundy so peculiarly perilous. Edward IV., a brave and victorious king, who had in his own person fought thirty battles, was now established on the throne of England, was brother to the Duchess of Burgundy, and, it might well be supposed, waited but a rupture between his near connection and Louis, to carry into France, through the ever-

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open gate of Calais, those arms which had been triumphant in the English civil wars, and to obliterate the recollection of internal dissensions by that most popular of all occupations amongst the English, an invasion of France. To this consideration was added the uncertain faith of the Duke of Bretagne, and other weighty subjects of reflection. So that, after a deep pause, when Louis again spoke, although in the same tone, it was with an altered spirit. "But God forbid," he said, "that aught less than necessity should make us, the Most Christian King, give cause to the effusion of Christian blood, if anything short of dishonour may avert such a calamity. We tender our subjects' safety dearer than the ruffle which our own dignity may receive from the rude breath of a malapert ambassador, who hath perhaps exceeded the errand with which he was charged.—Admit the Envoy of Burgundy to our presence."

"*Beati pacifici*," said the Cardinal Balue.

"True; and your Eminence knoweth that they who humble themselves shall be exalted," added the King.

"The Cardinal spoke an Amen, to which few assented; for even the pale cheek of Orleans kindled with shame, and Balafré suppressed his feelings so little, as to let the butt-end of his partisan fall heavily on the floor,—a movement of impatience for which he underwent a bitter reproof from the Cardinal, with a lecture on the mode of handling his arms when in presence of the Sovereign. The King himself seemed unusually embarrassed at the silence around him. "You are pensive, Dunois," he said—"You disapprove of our giving way to this hot-headed Envoy."

"By no means," said Dunois; "I meddle not with matters beyond my sphere. I was but thinking of asking a boon of your Majesty."

"A boon, Dunois—what is it?—You are an unfrequent suitor, and may count on our favour."

"I would, then, your Majesty would send me to Evreux to regulate the clergy," said Dunois, with military frankness.

"That were indeed beyond thy sphere," replied the King, smiling.

"I might order priests as well," replied the Count, "as my Lord Bishop of Evreux, or my Lord Cardinal, if he likes the title better, can exercise the soldiers of your Majesty's guard."

The King smiled again, and more mysteriously, while he

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whispered Dunois, "The time may come when you and I will regulate the priests together—But this is for the present a good conceited animal of a Bishop. Ah, Dunois! Rome, Rome puts him and other burdens upon us—But patience, cousin, and shuffle the cards, till our hand is a stronger one."*

The flourish of trumpets in the courtyard now announced the arrival of the Burgundian nobleman. All in the presence-chamber made haste to arrange themselves according to their proper places of precedence, the King and daughters remaining in the centre of the assembly.

The Count of Crèvecœur, a renowned and undaunted warrior, entered the apartment; and, contrary to the usage among the envoys of friendly powers, he appeared all armed, excepting his head, in a gorgeous suit of the most superb Milan armour, made of steel, inlaid and embossed with gold, which was wrought into the fantastic taste called the Arabesque. Around his neck, and over his polished cuirass, hung his master's order of the Golden Fleece, one of the most honoured associations of chivalry then known in Christendom.† A handsome page bore his helmet behind him, a herald preceded him, bearing his letters of credence which he offered on his knee to the King; while the ambassador himself paused in the midst of the hall, as if to give all present time to admire his lofty look, commanding stature, and undaunted composure of countenance and manner. The rest of his attendants waited in the antechamber, or courtyard.

"Approach, Seignior Count de Crèvecœur," said Louis, after a moment's glance at his commission; "we need not our cousin's letters of credence, either to introduce to us a warrior so well known, or to assure us of your highly deserved credit with your master. We trust that your fair partner, who shares some of our ancestral blood, is in good health. Had you brought her in your hand, Seignior Count, we might have thought you wore your armour, on this unwonted occasion, to maintain the superiority of her charms against the amorous chivalry of France. As it is, we cannot guess the reason of this complete panoply."

* Note E. Card-playing.

† [The military order of the Golden Fleece was instituted by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, in the year 1429, the King of Spain being grand-master of the Order, as Duke of Burgundy. The number of knights was limited to thirty-one.]

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"Sire," replied the ambassador, "the Count of Crèvecœur must lament his misfortune, and entreat your forgiveness, that he cannot, on this occasion, reply with such humble deference as is due to the royal courtesy with which your Majesty has honoured him. But, although it is only the voice of Philip Crèvecœur de Cordès which speaks, the words he utters must be those of his gracious Lord and Sovereign, the Duke of Burgundy."

"And what has Crèvecœur to say in the words of Burgundy?" said Louis, with an assumption of sufficient dignity. "Yet hold—remember, that in this presence, Philip Crèvecœur de Cordès speaks to him who is his Sovereign's Sovereign."

Crèvecœur bowed, and then spoke aloud:—"King of France, the mighty Duke of Burgundy once more sends you a written schedule of the wrongs and oppressions committed on his frontiers by your Majesty's garrisons and officers; and the first point of inquiry is, whether it is your Majesty's purpose to make him amends for these injuries?"

The King, looking slightly at the memorial which the herald delivered to him upon his knee, said, "These matters have been already long before our Council. Of the injuries complained of, some are in requital of those sustained by my subjects, some are affirmed without any proof, some have been retaliated by the Duke's garrisons and soldiers; and if there remain any which fall under none of these predicaments, we are not, as a Christian prince, averse to make satisfaction for wrongs actually sustained by our neighbour, though committed not only without our countenance, but against our express order."

"I will convey your Majesty's answer," said the ambassador, "to my most gracious master; yet, let me say, that, as it is in no degree different from the evasive replies which have already been returned to his just complaints, I cannot hope that it will afford the means of re-establishing peace and friendship betwixt France and Burgundy."

"Be that at God's pleasure," said the King. "It is not for dread of thy master's arms, but for the sake of peace only, that I return so temperate an answer to his injurious reproaches. Proceed with thine errand."

"My master's next demand," said the ambassador, "is, that your Majesty will cease your secret and underhand dealings with his towns of Ghent, Liege, and Malines. He requests

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that your Majesty will recall the secret agents, by whose means the discontents of his good citizens of Flanders are inflamed; and dismiss from your Majesty's dominions, or rather deliver up to the condign punishment of their liege lord, those traitorous fugitives, who, having fled from the scenes of their machinations, have found too ready a refuge in Paris, Orleans, Tours, and other French cities."

"Say to the Duke of Burgundy," replied the King, "that I know of no such indirect practices as those with which he injuriously charges me; that my subjects of France have frequent intercourse with the good cities of Flanders, for the purpose of mutual benefit by free traffic, which it would be as much contrary to the Duke's interest as mine to interrupt; and that many Flemings have residence in my kingdom, and enjoy the protection of my laws, for the same purpose; but none, to our knowledge, for those of treason or mutiny against the Duke. Proceed with your message—you have heard my answer."

"As formerly, Sire, with pain," replied the Count of Crèvecœur; "it not being of that direct or explicit nature which the Duke, my master, will accept, in atonement for a long train of secret machinations, not the less certain, though now disavowed by your Majesty. But I proceed with my message. The Duke of Burgundy farther requires the King of France to send back to his dominions without delay, and under a secure safeguard, the persons of Isabelle Countess of Croye, and of her relation and guardian the Countess Hameline, of the same family, in respect the said Countess Isabelle, being, by the law of the country, and the feudal tenure of her estates, the ward of the said Duke of Burgundy, hath fled from his dominions, and from the charge which he, as a careful guardian, was willing to extend over her, and is here maintained in secret by the King of France, and by him fortified in her contumacy to the Duke, her natural lord and guardian, contrary to the laws of God and man, as they ever have been acknowledged in civilised Europe.—Once more I pause for your Majesty's reply."

"You did well, Count de Crèvecœur," said Louis, scornfully, "to begin your embassy at an early hour; for if it be your purpose to call on me to account for the flight of every vassal whom your master's heady passion may have driven from his dominions, the bead-roll may last till sunset. Who can affirm that these ladies are in my dominions? who can presume to say,

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if it be so, that I have either countenanced their flight hither, or have received them with offers of protection? Nay, who is it will assert, that, if they are in France, their place of retirement is within my knowledge?"

"Sire," said Crèvecœur, "may it please your Majesty, I *was* provided with a witness on this subject—one who beheld these fugitive ladies in the inn called the Fleur-de-Lys, not far from this Castle—one who saw your Majesty in their company, though under the unworthy disguise of a burgess of Tours—one who received from them, in your royal presence, messages and letters to their friends in Flanders—all which he conveyed to the hand and ear of the Duke of Burgundy."

"Bring him forward," said the King; "place the man before my face who dares maintain these palpable falsehoods."

"You speak in triumph, my lord; for you are well aware that this witness no longer exists. When he lived, he was called Zamet Magraubin, by birth one of those Bohemian wanderers. He was yesterday, as I have learned, executed by a party of your Majesty's Provost-Marshal, to prevent, doubtless, his standing here, to verify what he said of this matter to the Duke of Burgundy, in presence of his Council, and of me, Philip Crèvecœur de Cordès."

"Now, by Our Lady of Embrun!" said the King, "so gross are these accusations, and so free of consciousness am I of aught that approaches them, that, by the honour of a King, I laugh, rather than am wroth at them. My Provost-guard daily put to death, as is their duty, thieves and vagabonds; and is my crown to be slandered with whatever these thieves and vagabonds may have said to our hot cousin of Burgundy and his wise counsellors? I pray you, tell my kind cousin, if he loves such companions, he had best keep them in his own estates; for here they are like to meet short shrift and a tight cord."

"My master needs no such subjects, Sir King," answered the Count, in a tone more disrespectful than he had yet permitted himself to make use of; "for the noble Duke uses not to inquire of witches, wandering Egyptians, or others, upon the destiny and fate of his neighbours and allies."

"We have had patience enough, and to spare," said the King, interrupting him; "and since thy sole errand here seems to be for the purpose of insult, we will send some one in our name to the Duke of Burgundy—convinced, in thus demeaning

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thyself towards us, thou hast exceeded thy commission, whatever that may have been."

"On the contrary," said Crèvecœur, "I have not yet acquitted myself of it.—Hearken, Louis of Valois, King of France—Hearken, nobles and gentlemen, who may be present—Hearken, all good and true men—And thou, Toison d'Or," addressing the herald, "make proclamation after me.—I, Philip Crèvecœur of Cordès, Count of the Empire, and Knight of the honourable and princely Order of the Golden Fleece, in the name of the most puissant Lord and Prince, Charles, by the grace of God, Duke of Burgundy and Lotharingia, of Brabant and Limbourg, of Luxembourg and of Gueldres; Earl of Flanders and of Artois; Count Palatine of Hainault, of Holland, Zealand, Namur, and Zutphen; Marquis of the Holy Empire; Lord of Friezeland, Salines, and Malines, do give you, Louis, King of France, openly to know, that you, having refused to remedy the various griefs, wrongs, and offences, done and wrought by you, or by and through your aid, suggestion, and instigation, against the said Duke and his loving subjects, he, by my mouth, renounces all allegiance and fealty towards your crown and dignity—pronounces you false and faithless; and defies you as a Prince, and as a man. There lies my gage, in evidence of what I have said."

So saying, he plucked the gauntlet off his right hand, and flung it down on the floor of the hall.

Until this last climax of audacity, there had been a deep silence in the royal apartment during the extraordinary scene; but no sooner had the clash of the gauntlet, when cast down, been echoed by the deep voice of Toison d'Or, the Burgundian herald, with the ejaculation, "Vive Bourgogne!" than there was a general tumult. While Dunois, Orleans, old Lord Crawford, and one or two others, whose rank authorised their interference, contended which should lift up the gauntlet, the others in the hall exclaimed, "Strike him down! Cut him to pieces! Comes he here to insult the King of France in his own palace!"

But the King appeased the tumult by exclaiming, in a voice like thunder, which overawed and silenced every other sound, "Silence, my lieges, lay not a hand on the man, not a finger on the gage!—And you, Sir Count, of what is your life composed, or how is it warranted, that you thus place it on the cast of a die so perilous? or is your Duke made of a different metal from

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other princes, since he thus asserts his pretended quarrel in a manner so unusual?"

"He is indeed framed of a different and more noble metal than the other princes of Europe," said the undaunted Count of Crèvecœur; "for, when not one of them dared to give shelter to you—to *you*, I say, King Louis—when you were yet only Dauphin, an exile from France, and pursued by the whole bitterness of your father's revenge, and all the power of his kingdom, you were received and protected like a brother by my noble master, whose generosity of disposition you have so grossly misused. Farewell, Sire, my mission is discharged."

So saying, the Count de Crèvecœur left the apartment abruptly, and without farther leave-taking.

"After him—after him—take up the gauntlet and after him!" said the King.—"I mean not you, Dunois, nor you, my Lord of Crawford, who, methinks, may be too old for such hot frays; nor you, cousin of Orleans, who are too young for them. —My Lord Cardinal—my Lord Bishop of Auxerre—it is your holy office to make peace among princes;—do you lift the gauntlet, and remonstrate with Count Crèvecœur on the sin he has committed, in thus insulting a great monarch in his own Court, and forcing us to bring the miseries of war upon his kingdom, and that of his neighbour."

Upon this direct personal appeal, the Cardinal Balue proceeded to lift the gauntlet, with such precaution as one would touch an adder,—so great was apparently his aversion to this symbol of war,—and presently left the royal apartment to hasten after the challenger.

Louis paused and looked round the circle of his courtiers, most of whom, except such as we have already distinguished, being men of low birth, and raised to their rank in the King's household for other gifts than courage or feats of arms, looked pale on each other, and had obviously received an unpleasant impression from the scene which had been just acted. Louis gazed on them with contempt, and then said aloud, "Although the Count of Crèvecœur be presumptuous and overweening, it must be confessed that in him the Duke of Burgundy hath as bold a servant as ever bore message for a prince. I would I knew where to find as faithful an envoy to carry back my answer."

"You do your French nobles injustice, Sire," said Dunois;

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"not one of them but would carry a defiance to Burgundy on the point of his sword."

"And, Sire," said old Crawford, "you wrong also the Scottish gentlemen who serve you. I, or any of my followers, being of meet rank, would not hesitate a moment to call yonder proud Count to a reckoning; my own arm is yet strong enough for the purpose, if I have but your Majesty's permission."

"But your Majesty," continued Dunois, "will employ us in no service through which we may win honour to ourselves, to your Majesty, or to France."

"Say rather," said the King, "that I will not give way, Dunois, to the headlong impetuosity, which, on some punctilio of chivalry, would wreck yourselves, the throne, France, and all. There is not one of you who knows not how precious every hour of peace is at this moment, when so necessary to heal the wounds of a distracted country; yet there is not one of you who would not rush into war on account of a tale of a wandering gipsy, or some errant damosel, whose reputation, perhaps, is scarce higher.—Here comes the Cardinal, and we trust with more pacific tidings—How now, my Lord—have you brought the Count to reason and to temper?"

"Sire," said Balue, "my task hath been difficult. I put it to yonder proud Count, how he dared to use towards your Majesty the presumptuous reproach with which his audience had broken up, and which must be understood as proceeding, not from his master, but from his own insolence, and as placing him therefore in your Majesty's discretion, for what penalty you might think proper."

"You said right," replied the King; "and what was his answer?"

"The Count," continued the Cardinal, "had at that moment his foot in the stirrup, ready to mount; and, on hearing my expostulation, he turned his head without altering his position. 'Had I,' said he, 'been fifty leagues distant, and had heard by report that a question vituperative of my Prince had been asked by the King of France, I had, even at that distance, instantly mounted, and returned to disburden my mind of the answer which I gave him but now.'"

"I said, sirs," said the King, turning around, without any show of angry emotion, "that in the Count Philip of Crèvecœur, our cousin the Duke possesses as worthy a servant as ever rode

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at a prince's right hand.—But you prevailed with him to stay?"

"To stay for twenty-four hours; and in the meanwhile to receive again his gage of defiance," said the Cardinal; "he has dismounted at the Fleur-de-Lys."

"See that he be nobly attended and cared for, at our charges," said the King; "such servant is a jewel in a prince's crown. Twenty-four hours?" he added, muttering to himself, and looking as if he were stretching his eyes to see into futurity; "twenty-four hours? 'tis of the shortest. Yet twenty-four hours, ably and skilfully employed, may be worth a year in the hand of indolent or incapable agents.—Well.—To the forest—to the forest, my gallant lords!—Orleans, my fair kinsman, lay aside that modesty, though it becomes you; mind not my Joan's coyness. The Loire may as soon avoid mingling with the Cher, as she from favouring your suit, or you from preferring it," he added, as the unhappy prince moved slowly on after his betrothed bride. "And now for your boar-spears, gentlemen; for Allegre, my pricker, hath harboured one that will try both dog and man.—Dunois, lend me your spear,—take mine, it is too weighty for me; but when did *you* complain of such a fault in your lance?—To horse—to horse, gentlemen."

And all the chase rode on.

CHAPTER NINTH.

THE BOAR-HUNT.

I will converse with unrespective boys
And iron-witted fools. None are for me
That look into me with suspicious eyes.

KING RICHARD.

ALL the experience which the Cardinal had been able to collect of his master's disposition, did not, upon the present occasion, prevent his falling into a great error of policy. His vanity induced him to think that he had been more successful in prevailing upon the Count of Crèvecœur to remain at Tours, than any other moderator whom the King might have employed, would, in all probability, have been. And as he was well aware of the

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importance which Louis attached to the postponement of a war with the Duke of Burgundy, he could not help showing that he conceived himself to have rendered the King great and acceptable service. He pressed nearer to the King's person than he was wont to do, and endeavoured to engage him in conversation on the events of the morning.

This was injudicious in more respects than one; for princes love not to see their subjects approach them with an air conscious of deserving, and thereby seeming desirous to extort acknowledgment and recompense for their services; and Louis, the most jealous monarch that ever lived, was peculiarly averse and inaccessible to any one who seemed either to presume upon service rendered, or to pry into his secrets.

Yet, hurried away, as the most cautious sometimes are, by the self-satisfied humour of the moment, the Cardinal continued to ride on the King's right hand, turning the discourse, whenever it was possible, upon Crèvecœur and his embassy; which, although it might be the matter at that moment most in the King's thoughts, was nevertheless precisely that which he was least willing to converse on. At length Louis, who had listened to him with attention, yet without having returned any answer which could tend to prolong the conversation, signed to Dunois, who rode at no great distance, to come up on the other side of his horse.

"We came hither for sport and exercise," said he, "but the reverend Father here would have us hold a council of state."

"I hope your Highness will excuse my assistance," said Dunois; "I am born to fight the battles of France, and have heart and hand for that, but I have no head for her councils."

"My Lord Cardinal hath a head turned for nothing else, Dunois," answered Louis; "he hath confessed Crèvecœur at the Castle-gate, and he hath communicated to us his whole shrift—Said you not the *whole?*" he continued, with an emphasis on the word, and a glance at the Cardinal, which shot from betwixt his long dark eyelashes, as a dagger gleams when it leaves the scabbard.

The Cardinal trembled, as, endeavouring to reply to the King's jest, he said, "That though his order were obliged to conceal the secrets of their penitents in general, there was no *sigillum confessionis* which could not be melted at his Majesty's breath"

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"And as his Eminence," said the King, "is ready to communicate the secrets of others to us, he naturally expects that we should be equally communicative to him; and, in order to get upon this reciprocal footing, he is very reasonably desirous to know if these two ladies of Croye be actually in our territories. We are sorry we cannot indulge his curiosity, not ourselves knowing in what precise place errant damsels, disguised princesses, distressed countesses, may lie leaguer within our dominions, which are, we thank God and our Lady of Embrun, rather too extensive for us to answer easily his Eminence's most reasonable inquiries. But supposing they were with us, what say you, Dunois, to our cousin's peremptory demand!"

"I will answer you, my Liege, if you will tell me in sincerity, whether you want war or peace," replied Dunois, with a frankness which, while it arose out of his own native openness and intrepidity of character, made him from time to time a considerable favourite with Louis, who, like all astucious persons, was as desirous of looking into the hearts of others as of concealing his own."

"By my halidome," said he, "I should be as well contented as thyself, Dunois, to tell thee my purpose, did I myself but know it exactly. But say I declared for war, what should I do with this beautiful and wealthy young heiress, supposing her to be in my dominions?"

"Bestow her in marriage on one of your own gallant followers, who has a heart to love, and an arm to protect her," said Dunois.

"Upon thyself, ha!" said the King. "*Pasques-dieu!* thou art more politic than I took thee for, with all thy bluntness."

"Nay, sire," answered Dunois, "I am aught except politic. By our lady of Orleans, I come to the point at once, as I ride my horse at the ring. Your Majesty owes the house of Orleans at least one happy marriage."

"And I will pay it, Count. *Pasques-dieu*, I will pay it!—See you not yonder fair couple?"

The King pointed to the unhappy Duke of Orleans and the Princess, who, neither daring to remain at a greater distance from the King, nor in his sight appear separate from each other, were riding side by side, yet with an interval of two or three yards betwixt them, a space which timidity on the one side, and

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aversion on the other, prevented them from diminishing, while neither dared to increase it.

Dunois looked in the direction of the King's signal, and as the situation of his unfortunate relative and the destined bride reminded him of nothing so much as of two dogs, which, forcibly linked together, remain nevertheless as widely separated as the length of their collars will permit, he could not help shaking his head, though he ventured not on any other reply to the hypocritical tyrant. Louis seemed to guess his thoughts.

"It will be a peaceful and quiet household they will keep—not much disturbed with children, I should augur.* But these are not always a blessing."

It was, perhaps, the recollection of his own filial ingratitude that made the King pause as he uttered the last reflection, and which converted the sneer that trembled on his lip into something resembling an expression of contrition. But he instantly proceeded in another tone.

"Frankly, my Dunois, much as I revere the holy sacrament of matrimony" (here he crossed himself), "I would rather the house of Orleans raised for me such gallant soldiers as thy father and thyself, who share the blood-royal of France without claiming its rights, than that the country should be torn to pieces, like to England, by wars arising from the rivalry of legitimate candidates for the crown. The lion should never have more than one cub."

Dunois sighed and was silent, conscious that contradicting his arbitrary Sovereign might well hurt his kinsman's interests, but could do him no service; yet he could not forbear adding, in the next moment,

"Since your Majesty has alluded to the birth of my father, I must needs own, that, setting the frailty of his parents on one side, he might be termed happier, and more fortunate, as the son of lawless love, than of conjugal hatred."

* Here the King touches on the very purpose for which he pressed on the match with such tyrannic severity, which was, that as the Princess's personal deformity admitted little chance of its being fruitful, the branch of Orleans, which was next in succession to the crown, might be, by the want of heirs, weakened or extinguished. In a letter to the Comte de Dammarten, Louis, speaking of his daughter's match, says, "Qu'ils n'auroient pas beaucoup d'embarras à nourrir les enfans qui naitroient de leur union; mais cependant elle aura lieu, quelque chose qu'on en puisse dire."—WRAXALL'S *History of France*, vol. i. p. 143, note.

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"Thou art a scandalous fellow, Dunois, to speak thus of holy wedlock," answered Louis, jestingly. "But to the devil with the discourse, for the boar is unharboured.—Lay on the dogs in the name of the holy Saint Hubert!—Ha! ha! tra-la-la-lira-la!" —And the King's horn rung merrily through the woods as he pushed forward on the chase, followed by two or three of his guards, amongst whom was our friend Quentin Durward. And here it was remarkable, that, even in the keen prosecution of his favourite sport, the King, in indulgence of his caustic disposition, found leisure to amuse himself by tormenting Cardinal Balue.

It was one of that able statesman's weaknesses, as we have elsewhere hinted, to suppose himself, though of low rank and limited education, qualified to play the courtier and the man of gallantry. He did not, indeed, actually enter the lists of chivalrous combat like Becket, or levy soldiers like Wolsey. But gallantry, in which they also were proficients, was his professed pursuit; and he likewise affected great fondness for the martial amusement of the chase. Yet, however well he might succeed with certain ladies, to whom his power, his wealth, and his influence as a statesman, might atone for deficiencies in appearance and manners, the gallant horses, which he purchased at almost any price, were totally insensible to the dignity of carrying a Cardinal, and paid no more respect to him than they would have done to his father, the carter, miller, or tailor, whom he rivalled in horsemanship. The King knew this, and, by alternately exciting and checking his own horse, he brought that of the Cardinal, whom he kept close by his side, into such a state of mutiny against his rider, that it became apparent they must soon part company; and then, in the midst of its starting, bolting, rearing, and lashing out, alternately, the royal tormentor rendered the rider miserable, by questioning him upon many affairs of importance, and hinting his purpose to take that opportunity of communicating to him some of those secrets of state, which the Cardinal had but a little while before seemed so anxious to learn.*

A more awkward situation could hardly be imagined, than that of a privy-counsellor forced to listen to and reply to his sovereign, while each fresh gambade of his unmanageable horse placed him in a new and more precarious attitude—his violet robe flying loose in every direction, and nothing securing him

* Note F. Balue's horsemanship.

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Boar Hunt.—PAGE 136.

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from an instant and perilous fall, save the depth of the saddle, and its height before and behind. Dunois laughed without restraint; while the King, who had a private mode of enjoying his jest inwardly, without laughing aloud, mildly rebuked his minister on his eager passion for the chase, which would not permit him to dedicate a few moments to business. "I will no longer be your hindrance to a course," continued he, addressing the terrified Cardinal, and giving his own horse the rein at the same time.

Before Balue could utter a word by way of answer or apology, his horse, seizing the bit with his teeth, went forth at an uncontrollable gallop, soon leaving behind the King and Dunois, who followed at a more regulated pace, enjoying the statesman's distressed predicament. If any of our readers has chanced to be run away with in his time (as we ourselves have in ours), he will have a full sense at once of the pain, peril, and absurdity of the situation. Those four limbs of the quadruped, which, noway under the rider's control, nor sometimes under that of the creature they more properly belong to, fly at such a rate as if the hindermost meant to overtake the foremost—those clinging legs of the biped which we so often wish safely planted on the greensward, but which now only augment our distress by pressing the animal's sides—the hands which have forsaken the bridle for the mane—the body, which, instead of sitting upright on the centre of gravity, as old Angelo used to recommend, or stooping forward like a jockey's at Newmarket, lies, rather than hangs, crouched upon the back of the animal, with no better chance of saving itself than a sack of corn—combine to make a picture more than sufficiently ludicrous to spectators, however uncomfortable to the exhibitor. But add to this some singularity of dress or appearance on the part of the unhappy cavalier—a robe of office, a splendid uniform, or any other peculiarity of costume, —and let the scene of action be a race-course, a review, a procession, or any other place of concourse and public display, and if the poor wight would escape being the object of a shout of inextinguishable laughter, he must contrive to break a limb or two, or, which will be more effectual, to be killed on the spot; for on no slighter condition will his fall excite anything like serious sympathy. On the present occasion, the short violet-coloured gown of the Cardinal, which he used as a riding dress

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(having changed his long robes before he left the Castle), his scarlet stockings, and scarlet hat, with the long strings hanging down, together with his utter helplessness, gave infinite zest to his exhibition of horsemanship.

The horse, having taken matters entirely into his own hand, flew rather than galloped up a long green avenue, overtook the pack in hard pursuit of the boar, and then, having overturned one or two yeomen prickers, who little expected to be charged in the rear,—having ridden down several dogs, and greatly confused the chase,—animated by the clamorous expostulations and threats of the huntsman, carried the terrified Cardinal past the formidable animal itself, which was rushing on at a speedy trot, furious and embossed with the foam which he churned around his tusks. Balue, on beholding himself so near the boar, set up a dreadful cry for help, which, or perhaps the sight of the boar, produced such an effect on his horse, that the animal interrupted its headlong career by suddenly springing to one side; so that the Cardinal, who had long kept his seat only because the motion was straight forward, now fell heavily to the ground. The conclusion of Balue's chase took place so near the boar, that, had not the animal been at that moment too much engaged about his own affairs, the vicinity might have proved as fatal to the Cardinal, as it is said to have done to Favila, King of the Visigoths, of Spain. The powerful Churchman got off, however, for the fright, and, crawling as hastily as he could out of the way of hounds and huntsmen, saw the whole chase sweep by him without affording him assistance; for hunters in those days were as little moved by sympathy for such misfortunes as they are in our own.

The King, as he passed, said to Dunois, "Yonder lies his Eminence low enough—he is no great huntsman, though for a fisher (when a secret is to be caught) he may match Saint Peter himself. He has, however, for once, I think, met with his match."

The Cardinal did not hear the words, but the scornful look with which they were spoken led him to suspect their general import. The devil is said to seize such opportunities of temptation as was now afforded by the passions of Balue, bitterly moved as they had been by the scorn of the King. The momentary fright was over so soon as he had assured himself that his fall was harmless; but mortified vanity, and resent-

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ment against his Sovereign, had a much longer influence on his feelings.

After all the chase had passed him, a single cavalier, who seemed rather to be a spectator than a partaker of the sport, rode up with one or two attendants, and expressed no small surprise to find the Cardinal upon the ground, without a horse or attendants, and in such a plight as plainly showed the nature of the accident which had placed him there. To dismount, and offer his assistance in this predicament,—to cause one of his attendants resign a staid and quiet palfrey for the Cardinal's use—to express his surprise at the customs of the French Court, which thus permitted them to abandon to the dangers of the chase, and forsake in his need, their wisest statesman, were the natural modes of assistance and consolation which so strange a rencontre supplied to Crèvecœur, for it was the Burgundian ambassador who came to the assistance of the fallen Cardinal.

He found the minister in a lucky time and humour for essaying some of those practices on his fidelity, to which it is well known that Balue had the criminal weakness to listen. Already in the morning, as the jealous temper of Louis had suggested, more had passed betwixt them than the Cardinal durst have reported to his master. But although he had listened with gratified ears to the high value, which, he was assured by Crèvecœur, the Duke of Burgundy placed upon his person and talents, and not without a feeling of temptation, when the Count hinted at the munificence of his master's disposition, and the rich benefices of Flanders, it was not until the accident, as we have related, had highly irritated him, that, stung with wounded vanity, he resolved, in a fatal hour, to show Louis XI. that no enemy can be so dangerous as an offended friend and confidant.

On the present occasion, he hastily requested Crèvecœur to separate from him, lest they should be observed, but appointed him a meeting for the evening in the Abbey of Saint Martin's at Tours, after vesper service; and that in a tone which assured the Burgundian that his master had obtained an advantage hardly to have been hoped for, except in such a moment of exasperation.

In the meanwhile, Louis, who, though the most politic Prince of his time, upon this, as on other occasions, had

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suffered his passions to interfere with his prudence, followed contentedly the chase of the wild boar, which was now come to an interesting point. It had so happened that a sounder (*i.e.*, in the language of the period, a boar of only two years old) had crossed the track of the proper object of the chase, and withdrawn in pursuit of him all the dogs (except two or three couple of old stanch hounds), and the greater part of the huntsmen. The King saw, with internal glee, Dunois, as well as others, follow upon this false scent, and enjoyed in secret the thought of triumphing over that accomplished knight, in the art of venerie, which was then thought almost as glorious as war. Louis was well mounted, and followed close on the hounds; so that, when the original boar turned to bay in a marshy piece of ground, there was no one near him but the King himself.

Louis showed all the bravery and expertness of an experienced huntsman; for, unheeding the danger, he rode up to the tremendous animal, which was defending itself with fury against the dogs, and struck him with his boar-spear; yet, as the horse shyed from the boar, the blow was not so effectual as either to kill or disable him. No effort could prevail on the horse to charge a second time; so that the King, dismounting, advanced on foot against the furious animal, holding naked in his hand one of those short, sharp, straight, and pointed swords, which huntsmen used for such encounters. The boar instantly quitted the dogs to rush on his human enemy, while the King, taking his station, and posting himself firmly, presented the sword, with the purpose of aiming it at the boar's throat, or rather chest, within the collar-bone; in which case, the weight of the beast, and the impetuosity of its career, would have served to accelerate its own destruction. But, owing to the wetness of the ground, the King's foot slipped, just as this delicate and perilous manœuvre ought to have been accomplished, so that the point of the sword encountering the cuirass of bristles on the outside of the creature's shoulder, glanced off without making any impression, and Louis fell flat on the ground. This was so far fortunate for the Monarch, because the aminal, owing to the King's fall, missed his blow in his turn, and in passing only rent with his tusk the King's short hunting-cloak, instead of ripping up his thigh. But when, after running a little ahead in the fury of his course, the boar turned to repeat his attack on the King at the moment when

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he was rising, the life of Louis was in imminent danger. At this critical moment, Quentin Durward, who had been thrown out in the chase by the slowness of his horse, but who, nevertheless, had luckily distinguished and followed the blast of the King's horn, rode up, and transfixed the animal with his spear.

The King, who had by this time recovered his feet, came in turn to Durward's assistance, and cut the animal's throat with his sword. Before speaking a word to Quentin, he measured the huge creature not only by paces, but even by feet—then wiped the sweat from his brow, and the blood from his hands—then took off his hunting-cap, hung it on a bush, and devoutly made his orisons to the little leaden images which it contained—and at length, looking upon Durward, said to him, "Is it thou, my young Scot?—thou hast begun thy woodcraft well, and Maitre Pierre owes thee as good entertainment as he gave thee at the Fleur-de-Lys yonder.—Why dost thou not speak? Thou hast lost thy forwardness and fire, methinks, at the Court, where others find both."

Quentin, as shrewd a youth as ever Scottish breeze breathed caution into, had imbibed more awe than confidence towards his dangerous master, and was far too wise to embrace the perilous permission of familiarity which he seemed thus invited to use. He answered in very few and well-chosen words, that if he ventured to address his Majesty at all, it could be but to crave pardon for the rustic boldness with which he had conducted himself when ignorant of his high rank.

"Tush! man," said the King; "I forgive thy sauciness for thy spirit and shrewdness. I admired how near thou didst hit upon my gossip Tristan's occupation. You have nearly tasted of his handiwork since, as I am given to understand. I bid thee beware of him; he is a merchant who deals in rough bracelets and tight necklaces. Help me to my horse—I like thee, and will do thee good. Build on no man's favour but mine—not even on thine uncle's or Lord Crawford's—and say nothing of thy timely aid in this matter of the boar; for if a man makes boast that he has served a King in such a pinch, he must take the braggart humour for its own recompense."

The King then winded his horn, which brought up Dunois and several attendants, whose compliments he received on the slaughter of such a noble animal, without scrupling to appro-

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priate a much greater share of merit than actually belonged to him; for he mentioned Durward's assistance as slightly as a sportsman of rank, who, in boasting of the number of birds which he has bagged, does not always dilate upon the presence and assistance of the gamekeeper. He then ordered Dunois to see that the boar's carcass was sent to the brotherhood of Saint Martin, at Tours, to mend their fare on holydays, and that they might remember the King in their private devotions.

"And," said Louis, "who hath seen his Eminence my Lord Cardinal? Methinks it were but poor courtesy, and cold regard to Holy Church, to leave him afoot here in the forest."

"May it please you, sire," said Quentin, when he saw that all were silent, "I saw his Lordship the Cardinal accommodated with a horse, on which he left the forest."

"Heaven cares for its own," replied the King. "Set forward to the Castle, my lords; we'll hunt no more this morning.—You, Sir Squire," addressing Quentin, "reach me my wood-knife—It has dropt from the sheath beside the quarry there. Ride on, Dunois—I follow instantly."

Louis, whose lightest motions were often conducted like stratagems, thus gained an opportunity to ask Quentin privately, "My bonny Scot, thou hast an eye, I see—Canst thou tell me who helped the Cardinal to a palfrey?—Some stranger, I suppose; for, as *I* passed without stopping, the courtiers would likely be in no hurry to do him such a timely good turn."

"I saw those who aided his Eminence but an instant, sire," said Quentin; "it was only a hasty glance, for I had been unluckily thrown out, and was riding fast, to be in my place; but I think it was the Ambassador of Burgundy and his people."

"Ha!" said Louis.—"Well, be it so—France will match them yet."

There was nothing more remarkable happened, and the King, with his retinue, returned to the Castle.

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CHAPTER TENTH.

THE SENTINEL.

Where should this music be? i' the air, or the earth?
THE TEMPEST.

——— I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death.
COMUS.

QUENTIN had hardly reached his little cabin, in order to make some necessary changes in his dress, when his worthy relative required to know the full particulars of all that had befallen him at the hunt.

The youth, who could not help thinking that his uncle's hand was probably more powerful than his understanding, took care, in his reply, to leave the King in full possession of the victory which he had seemed desirous to appropriate. Le Balafré's reply was a boast of how much better he himself would have behaved in the like circumstances, and it was mixed with a gentle censure of his nephew's slackness, in not making in to the King's assistance, when he might be in imminent peril. The youth had prudence, in answer, to abstain from all farther vindication of his own conduct, except that, according to the rules of woodcraft, he held it ungentle to interfere with the game attacked by another hunter, unless he was specially called upon for his assistance. This discussion was scarcely ended, when occasion was afforded Quentin to congratulate himself for observing some reserve towards his kinsman. A low tap at the door announced a visitor—it was presently opened, and Oliver Dain, or Mauvais, or Diable, for by all these names he was known, entered the apartment.

This able but most unprincipled man has been already described, in so far as his exterior is concerned. The aptest resemblance of his motions and manners might perhaps be to those of the domestic cat, which, while couching in seeming slumber, or gliding through the apartment with slow, stealthy, and timid steps, is now engaged in watching the hole of some unfortunate mouse, now in rubbing herself with apparent

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confidence and fondness against those by whom she desires to be caressed, and, presently after, is flying upon her prey, or scratching, perhaps, the very object of her former cajolements.

He entered with stooping shoulders, a humble and modest look, and threw such a degree of civility into his address to the Seignior Balafré, that no one who saw the interview could have avoided concluding that he came to ask a boon of the Scottish Archer. He congratulated Lesly on the excellent conduct of his young kinsman in the chase that day, which, he observed, had attracted the King's particular attention. He here paused for a reply; and, with his eyes fixed on the ground, save just when once or twice they stole upwards to take a side glance at Quentin, heard Balafré observe, "That his Majesty had been unlucky in not having himself by his side instead of his nephew, as he would questionless have made in, and speared the brute, a matter which he understood Quentin had left upon his Majesty's royal hands, so far as he could learn the story. But it will be a lesson to his Majesty," he said, "while he lives, to mount a man of my inches on a better horse; for how could my great hill of a Flemish dray-horse keep up with his Majesty's Norman runner? I am sure I spurred till his sides were furrowed. It is ill considered, Master Oliver, and you must represent it to his Majesty."

Master Oliver only replied to this observation by turning towards the bold bluff speaker one of those slow dubious glances, which, accompanied by a slight motion of the hand, and a gentle depression of the head to one side, may be either interpreted as a mute assent to what is said, or as a cautious deprecation of farther prosecution of the subject. It was a keener, more scrutinising glance, which he bent on the youth, as he said, with an ambiguous smile, "So, young man, is it the wont of Scotland to suffer your Princes to be endangered for the lack of aid in such emergencies as this of to-day?"

"It is our custom," answered Quentin, determined to throw no farther light on the subject, "not to encumber them with assistance in honourable pastimes, when they can aid themselves without it. We hold that a Prince in a hunting-field must take his chance with others, and that he comes there for the very purpose. What were woodcraft without fatigue and without danger?"

"You hear the silly boy," said his uncle; "that is always

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the way with him; he hath an answer or a reason ready to be rendered to every one. I wonder whence he hath caught the gift; I never could give a reason for anything I have ever done in my life, except for eating when I was a-hungry, calling the muster-roll, and such points of duty as the like."

"And pray, worthy Seignior," said the royal tonsor, looking at him from under his eyelids, "what might your reason be for calling the muster-roll on such occasions?"

"Because the Captain commanded me," said Le Balafré. "By Saint Giles, I know no other reason! If he had commanded Tyrie or Cunningham, they must have done the same."

"A most military final cause!" said Oliver.—"But, Seignior Le Balafré, you will be glad, doubtless, to learn, that his Majesty is so far from being displeased with your nephew's conduct, that he hath selected him to execute a piece of duty this afternoon."

"Selected *him?*" said Balafré in great surprise;—"Selected *me*, I suppose, you mean?"

"I mean precisely as I speak," replied the barber, in a mild but decided tone; "the King hath a commission with which to intrust your nephew."

"Why, wherefore, and for what reason?" said Balafré; "Why doth he choose the boy, and not me?"

"I can go no farther back than your own ultimate cause, Seignior Le Balafré; such are his Majesty's commands. But," said he, "if I might use the presumption to form a conjecture, it may be his Majesty hath work to do, fitter for a youth like your nephew, than for an experienced warrior like yourself, Seignior Balafré.—Wherefore, young gentleman, get your weapons and follow me. Bring with you a harquebuss, for you are to mount sentinel."

"Sentinel!" said the uncle—"Are you sure you are right, Master Oliver? The inner guards of the Castle have ever been mounted by those only who have (like me) served twelve years in our honourable body."

"I am quite certain of his Majesty's pleasure," said Oliver, "and must no longer delay executing it."

"But," said Le Balafré, "my nephew is not even a free Archer, being only an Esquire, serving under my lance."

"Pardon me," answered Oliver; "the King sent for the

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register not half-an-hour since, and enrolled him among the Guard.—Have the goodness to assist to put your nephew in order for the service."

Balafré, who had no ill-nature, or even much jealousy in his disposition, hastily set about adjusting his nephew's dress, and giving him directions for his conduct under arms, but was unable to refrain from larding them with interjections of surprise at such luck chancing to fall upon the young man so early.

"It had never taken place before in the Scottish Guard," he said, "not even in his own instance. But doubtless his service must be to mount guard over the popinjays and Indian peacocks, which the Venetian ambassador had lately presented to the King—it could be nothing else; and such duty being only fit for a beardless boy" (here he twirled his own grim mustaches), "he was glad the lot had fallen on his fair nephew."

Quick and sharp of wit, as well as ardent in fancy, Quentin saw visions of higher importance in this early summons to the royal presence, and his heart beat high at the anticipation of rising into speedy distinction. He determined carefully to watch the manners and language of his conductor, which he suspected must, in some cases at least, be interpreted by contraries, as soothsayers are said to discover the interpretation of dreams. He could not but hug himself on having observed strict secrecy on the events of the chase, and then formed a resolution, which, for so young a person, had much prudence in it, that while he breathed the air of this secluded and mysterious Court, he would keep his thoughts locked in his bosom, and his tongue under the most careful regulation.

His equipment was soon complete, and, with his harquebuss on his shoulder (for though they retained the name of Archers, the Scottish Guard very early substituted firearms for the long bow, in the use of which their nation never excelled), he followed Master Oliver out of the barrack.

His uncle looked long after him, with a countenance in which wonder was blended with curiosity; and though neither envy nor the malignant feelings which it engenders, entered into his honest meditations, there was yet a sense of wounded or diminished self-importance, which mingled with the pleasure excited by his nephew's favourable commencement of service.

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He shook his head gravely, opened a privy cupboard, took out a large *bottrine* of stout old wine, shook it to examine how low the contents had ebbed, filled and drank a hearty cup; then took his seat, half reclining, on the great oaken settle, and having once again slowly shaken his head, received so much apparent benefit from the oscillation, that, like the toy called a mandarin, he continued the motion until he dropped into a slumber, from which he was first roused by the signal to dinner.

When Quentin Durward left his uncle to these sublime meditations, he followed his conductor, Master Oliver, who, without crossing any of the principal courts, led him, partly through private passages exposed to the open air, but chiefly through a maze of stairs, vaults, and galleries, communicating with each other by secret doors, and at unexpected points, into a large and spacious latticed gallery, which, from its breadth, might have been almost termed a hall, hung with tapestry more ancient than beautiful, and with a very few of the hard, cold, ghastly-looking pictures, belonging to the first dawn of the arts, which preceded their splendid sunrise. These were designed to represent the Paladins of Charlemagne, who made such a distinguished figure in the romantic history of France; and as the gigantic form of the celebrated Orlando constituted the most prominent figure, the apartment acquired from him the title of Roland's Hall, or Roland's Gallery.*

"You will keep watch here," said Oliver, in a low whisper, as if the hard delineations of monarchs and warriors around could have been offended at the elevation of his voice, or as if he had feared to awaken the echoes that lurked among the groined vaults and Gothic drop-work on the ceiling of this huge and dreary apartment.

"What are the orders and signs of my watch?" answered Quentin in the same suppressed tone.

"Is your harquebuss loaded?" replied Oliver, without answering his query.

"That," answered Quentin, "is soon done;" and proceeded to charge his weapon, and to light the slow-match (by which

* Charlemagne, I suppose on account of his unsparing rigour to the Saxons, and other heathens, was accounted a saint during the dark ages; and Louis XI., as one of his successors, honoured his shrine with peculiar observance.

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when necessary it was discharged), at the embers of a wood-fire, which was expiring in the huge hall chimney—a chimney itself so large, that it might have been called a Gothic closet or chapel appertaining to the hall.

When this was performed, Oliver told him that he was ignorant of one of the high privileges of his own corps, which only received orders from the King in person, or the High Constable of France, in lieu of their own officers. "You are placed here by his Majesty's command, young man," added Oliver, "and you will not be long here without knowing wherefore you are summoned. Meantime your walk extends along this gallery. You are permitted to stand still while you list, but on no account to sit down or quit your weapon. You are not to sing aloud, or whistle upon any account; but you may, if you list, mutter some of the church's prayers, or what else you list that has no offence in it, in a low voice. Farewell, and keep good watch."

"Good watch!" thought the youthful soldier as his guide stole away from him with that noiseless gliding step which was peculiar to him, and vanished through a side-door behind the arras—"Good watch! But upon whom and against whom?—for what, save bats or rats, are there here to contend with, unless these grim old representatives of humanity should start into life for the disturbance of my guard? Well, it is my duty, I suppose, and I must perform it."

With the vigorous purpose of discharging his duty, even to the very rigour, he tried to while away the time with some of the pious hymns which he had learned in the convent in which he had found shelter after the death of his father—allowing in his own mind, that, but for the change of a novice's frock for the rich military dress which he now wore, his soldierly walk in the royal gallery of France resembled greatly those of which he had tired excessively in the cloistered seclusion of Aberbrothick.

Presently, as if to convince himself he now belonged not to the cell but to the world, he chanted to himself, but in such tone as not to exceed the license given to him, some of the ancient rude ballads which the old family harper had taught him of the defeat of the Danes at Aberlemno and Forres, the murder of king Duffus at Forfar, and other pithy sonnets and lays, which appertained to the history of his distant native

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country, and particularly of the district to which he belonged. This wore away a considerable space of time, and it was now more than two hours past noon, when Quentin was reminded by his appetite, that the good fathers of Aberbrothick, however strict in demanding his attendance upon the hours of devotion, were no less punctual in summoning him to those of refection; whereas here, in the interior of a royal palace, after a morning spent in exercise, and a noon exhausted in duty, no man seemed to consider it as a natural consequence that he must be impatient for his dinner.

There are, however, charms in sweet sounds which can lull to rest even the natural feelings of impatience, by which Quentin was now visited. At the opposite extremities of the long hall or gallery, were two large doors, ornamented with heavy architraves, probably opening into different suites of apartments, to which the gallery served as a medium of mutual communication. As the sentinel directed his solitary walk betwixt these two entrances, which formed the boundary of his duty, he was startled by a strain of music, which was suddenly waked near one of those doors, and which, at least in his imagination, was a combination of the same lute and voice by which he had been enchanted on the preceding day. All the dreams of yesterday morning, so much weakened by the agitating circumstances which he had since undergone, again rose more vivid from their slumber, and, planted on the spot where his ear could most conveniently drink in the sounds, Quentin remained, with his harquebuss shouldered, his mouth half-open, ear, eye, and soul directed to the spot, rather the picture of a sentinel than a living form,—without any other idea than that of catching, if possible, each passing sound of the dulcet melody.

These delightful sounds were but partially heard—they languished, lingered, ceased entirely, and were from time to time renewed after uncertain intervals. But, besides that music, like beauty, is often most delightful, or at least most interesting to the imagination, when its charms are but partially displayed, and the imagination is left to fill up what is from distance but imperfectly detailed, Quentin had matter enough to fill up his reverie during the intervals of fascination. He could not doubt, from the report of his uncle's comrades, and the scene which had passed in the presence-chamber that morning, that the

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syren who thus delighted his ears, was not, as he had profanely supposed, the daughter or kinswoman of a base *Cabaretier*, but the same disguised and distressed Countess, for whose cause kings and princes were now about to buckle on armour, and put lance in rest. A hundred wild dreams, such as romantic and adventurous youth readily nourished in a romantic and adventurous age, chased from his eyes the bodily presentment of the actual scene, and substituted their own bewildering delusions, when at once, and rudely, they were banished by a rough grasp laid upon his weapon, and a harsh voice which exclaimed close to his ear, "Ha! *Pasques-dieu*, Sir Squire, methinks you keep sleepy ward here!"

The voice was the tuneless, yet impressive and ironical tone of Maitre Pierre, and Quentin, suddenly recalled to himself, saw with shame and fear, that he had, in his reverie, permitted Louis himself—entering probably by some secret door, and gliding along by the wall, or behind the tapestry—to approach him so nearly as almost to master his weapon.

The first impulse of his surprise was to free his harquebuss by a violent exertion, which made the King stagger backward into the hall. His next apprehension was, that in obeying the animal instinct, as it may be termed, which prompts a brave man to resist an attempt to disarm him, he had aggravated, by a personal struggle with the King, the displeasure produced by the negligence with which he had performed his duty upon guard; and, under this impression, he recovered his harquebuss without almost knowing what he did, and having again shouldered it, stood motionless before the Monarch, whom he had reason to conclude he had mortally offended.

Louis, whose tyrannical disposition was less founded on natural ferocity or cruelty of temper, than on cold-blooded policy and jealous suspicion, had, nevertheless, a share of that caustic severity which would have made him a despot in private conversation, and always seemed to enjoy the pain which he inflicted on occasions like the present. But he did not push his triumph far, and contented himself with saying,—"Thy service of the morning hath already overpaid some negligence in so young a soldier—Hast thou dined?"

Quentin, who rather looked to be sent to the Provost-Marshal, than greeted with such a compliment, answered humbly in the negative.

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"Poor lad," said Louis, in a softer tone than he usually spoke in, "hunger hath made him drowsy.—I know thine appetite is a wolf," he continued; "and I will save thee from one wild beast as thou didst me from another;—thou hast been prudent too in that matter, and I thank thee for it.—Canst thou yet hold out an hour without food?"

"Four-and-twenty, sire," replied Durward, "or I were no true Scot."

"I would not for another kingdom be the pasty which should encounter thee after such a vigil," said the King; "but the question now is, not of thy dinner but of my own. I admit to my table this day, and in strict privacy, the Cardinal Balue and this Burgundian—this Count de Crèvecœur, and something may chance—the devil is most busy when foes meet on terms of truce."

He stopped, and remained silent, with a deep and gloomy look. As the King was in no haste to proceed, Quentin at length ventured to ask what his duty was to be in these circumstances.

"To keep watch at the '*buffet*,' with thy loaded weapon," said Louis; "and if there is treason, to shoot the traitor dead."

"Treason, sire! and in this guarded Castle!" exclaimed Durward.

"You think it impossible," said the King, not offended, it would seem, by his frankness; "but our history has shown that treason can creep into an auger-hole—Treason excluded by guards! Oh, thou silly boy!—*quis custodiat ipsos custodes*—who shall exclude the treason of those very warders?"

"Their Scottish honour," answered Durward, boldly.

"True; most right—thou pleasest me," said the King, cheerfully; "the Scottish honour was ever true, and I trust it accordingly. But treason!"—Here he relapsed into his former gloomy mood, and traversed the apartment with unequal steps—"She sits at our feasts, she sparkles in our bowls, she wears the beard of our counsellors, the smiles of our courtiers, the crazy laugh of our jesters—above all, she lies hid under the friendly air of a reconciled enemy. Louis of Orleans trusted John of Burgundy—he was murdered in the Rue Barbette. John of Burgundy trusted the faction of Orleans—he was murdered on the bridge of Montereau.—I will trust no one—no one. Hark ye; I will keep my eye on that insolent Count; ay, and

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on the Churchman too, whom I hold not too faithful. When I say *Ecosse, en avant*,* shoot Crèvecœur dead on the spot."

"It is my duty," said Quentin, "your Majesty's life being endangered."

"Certainly—I mean it no otherwise," said the King.—"What should I get by slaying this insolent soldier?—Were it the Constable Saint Paul indeed"—Here he paused, as if he thought he had said a word too much, but resumed, laughing, "There's our brother-in-law, James of Scotland—your own James, Quentin—poniarded the Douglas when on a hospitable visit, within his own royal castle of Skirling."†

"Of Stirling," said Quentin, "and so please your Highness.—It was a deed of which came little good."

"Stirling call you the Castle?" said the King, overlooking the latter part of Quentin's speech—"Well, let it be Stirling—the name is nothing to the purpose. But I meditate no injury to these men—none—It would serve me nothing. They may not purpose equally fair by me—I rely on thy harquebuss."

"I shall be prompt at the signal," said Quentin; "but yet"——

"You hesitate," said the King. "Speak out—I give thee full leave. From such as thou art, hints may be caught that are right valuable."

"I would only presume to say," replied Quentin, "that your Majesty having occasion to distrust this Burgundian, I marvel that you suffer him to approach so near your person, and that in privacy."

"Oh, content you, Sir Squire," said the King. "There are some dangers, which, when they are braved, disappear, and which yet, when there is an obvious and apparent dread of them displayed, become certain and inevitable. When I walk boldly up to a surly mastiff, and caress him, it is ten to one I soothe him to good temper; if I show fear of him, he flies on me and rends me. I will be thus far frank with thee—It concerns me nearly that this man returns not to his headlong master in a resentful humour. I run my risk, therefore. I have never shunned to expose my life for the weal of my kingdom.—Follow me."

Louis led his young Life-guards-man, for whom he seemed

* Forward, Scotland.

† Note G. Murder of Lord Douglas.

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to have taken a special favour, through the side door by which he had himself entered, saying, as he showed it him, "He who would thrive at Court must know the private wickets and concealed staircases—ay, and the traps and pitfalls of the palace, as well as the principal entrances, folding-doors, and portals."

After several turns and passages, the King entered a small vaulted room, where a table was prepared for dinner with three covers. The whole furniture and arrangements of the room were plain almost to meanness. A "*buffet*," or folding and movable cupboard, held a few pieces of gold and silver plate, and was the only article in the chamber which had, in the slightest degree, the appearance of royalty. Behind this cupboard, and completely hidden by it, was the post which Louis assigned to Quentin Durward; and after having ascertained, by going to different parts of the room, that he was invisible from all quarters, he gave him his last charge—"Remember the word, *Ecosse, en avant;* and so soon as ever I utter these sounds, throw down the screen—spare not for cup or goblet, and be sure thou take good aim at Crèvecœur—If thy piece fail, cling to him, and use thy knife—Oliver and I can deal with the Cardinal."

Having thus spoken, he whistled aloud, and summoned into the apartment Oliver, who was premier-valet of the chamber as well as barber, and who, in fact, performed all offices immediately connected with the King's person, and who now appeared, attended by two old men, who were the only assistants or waiters at the royal table. So soon as the King had taken his place, the visitors were admitted; and Quentin, though himself unseen, was so situated as to remark all the particulars of the interview.

The King welcomed his visitors with a degree of cordiality, which Quentin had the utmost difficulty to reconcile with the directions which he had previously received, and the purpose for which he stood behind the buffet with his deadly weapon in readiness. Not only did Louis appear totally free from apprehension of any kind, but one would have supposed that those visitors whom he had done the high honour to admit to his table, were the very persons in whom he could most unreservedly confide, and whom he was most willing to honour. Nothing could be more dignified, and, at the same time, more courteous, than his demeanour. While all around him, in-

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cluding even his own dress, was far beneath the splendour which the petty princes of the kingdom displayed in their festivities, his own language and manners were those of a mighty Sovereign in his most condescending mood. Quentin was tempted to suppose, either that the whole of his previous conversation with Louis had been a dream, or that the dutiful demeanour of the Cardinal, and the frank, open, and gallant bearing of the Burgundian noble, had entirely erased the King's suspicion.

But whilst the guests, in obedience to the King, were in the act of placing themselves at the table, his Majesty darted one keen glance on them, and then instantly directed his look to Quentin's post. This was done in an instant; but the glance conveyed so much doubt and hatred towards his guests, such a peremptory injunction on Quentin to be watchful in attendance, and prompt in execution, that no room was left for doubting that the sentiments of Louis continued unaltered, and his apprehensions unabated. He was, therefore, more than ever astonished at the deep veil under which that Monarch was able to conceal the movements of his jealous disposition.

Appearing to have entirely forgotten the language which Crèvecœur had held towards him in the face of his Court, the King conversed with him of old times, of events which had occurred during his own exile in the territories of Burgundy, and inquired respecting all the nobles with whom he had been then familiar, as if that period had indeed been the happiest of his life, and as if he retained towards all who had contributed to soften the term of his exile, the kindest and most grateful sentiments.

"To an ambassador of another nation," he said, "I would have thrown something of state into our reception; but to an old friend, who often shared my board at the Castle of Genappes,* I wished to show myself, as I love best to live, old Louis of Valois, as simple and plain as any of his Parisian *badauds*. But I directed them to make some better cheer than ordinary for you, Sir Count, for I know your Burgundian proverb, '*Mieux vault bon repas que bel habit;*' and therefore I bid them have some care of our table. For our wine, you

* During his residence in Burgundy, in his father's lifetime, Genappes was the usual abode of Louis. This period of exile is often alluded to in the novel.

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know well it is the subject of an old emulation betwixt France and Burgundy, which we will presently reconcile; for I will drink to you in Burgundy, and you, Sir Count, shall pledge me in Champagne.—Here, Oliver, let me have a cup of *Vin d'Auxerre;*" and he hummed gaily a song then well known—

"'*Auxerre est la boisson des Rois.*'

"Here, Sir Count, I drink to the health of the noble Duke of Burgundy, our kind and loving cousin.—Oliver, replenish yon golden cup with *Vin de Rheims*, and give it to the Count on your knee—he represents our loving brother.—My Lord Cardinal, we will ourself fill your cup."

"You have already, Sire, even to overflowing," said the Cardinal, with the lowly mien of a favourite towards an indulgent master.

"Because we know that your Eminence can carry it with a steady hand," said Louis. "But which side do you espouse in the great controversy—Sillery or Auxerre—France or Burgundy?"

"I will stand neutral, Sire," said the Cardinal, "and replenish my cup with Auvernat."

"A neutral has a perilous part to sustain," said the King; but as he observed the Cardinal colour somewhat, he glided from the subject, and added, "But you prefer the Auvernat, because it is so noble a wine it endures not water.—You, Sir Count, hesitate to empty your cup. I trust you have found no national bitterness at the bottom."

"I would, Sire," said the Count de Crèvecœur, "that all national quarrels could be as pleasantly ended as the rivalry betwixt our vineyards."

"With time, Sir Count," answered the King, "with time—such time as you have taken to your draught of Champagne.—And now that it is finished, favour me by putting the goblet in your bosom, and keeping it as a pledge of our regard. It is not to every one that we would part with it. It belonged of yore to that terror of France, Henry V. of England, and was taken when Rouen was reduced, and those islanders expelled from Normandy by the joint arms of France and Burgundy. It cannot be better bestowed than on a noble and valiant Burgundian, who well knows that on the union of these two nations depends the continuance of the freedom of the Continent from the English yoke."

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The Count made a suitable answer, and Louis gave unrestrained way to the satirical gaiety of disposition which sometimes enlivened the darker shades of his character. Leading, of course, the conversation, his remarks, always shrewd and caustic, and often actually witty, were seldom good-natured, and the anecdotes with which he illustrated them were often more humorous than delicate; but in no one word, syllable, or letter, did he betray the state of mind of one who, apprehensive of assassination, hath in his apartment an armed soldier, with his piece loaded, in order to prevent or anticipate an attack on his person.

The Count of Crèvecœur gave frankly into the King's humour; while the smooth churchman laughed at every jest, and enhanced every ludicrous idea, without exhibiting any shame at expressions which made the rustic young Scot blush even in his place of concealment.* In about an hour and a half the tables were drawn; and the King, taking courteous leave of his guests, gave the signal that it was his desire to be alone.

So soon as all, even Oliver, had retired, he called Quentin from his place of concealment; but with a voice so faint, that the youth could scarce believe it to be the same which had so lately given animation to the jest, and zest to the tale. As he approached, he saw an equal change in his countenance. The light of assumed vivacity had left the King's eyes, the smile had deserted his face, and he exhibited all the fatigue of a celebrated actor, when he has finished the exhausting representation of some favourite character, in which, while upon the stage, he had displayed the utmost vivacity.

"Thy watch is not yet over," said he to Quentin—"refresh thyself for an instant—yonder table affords the means—I will then instruct thee in thy farther duty. Meanwhile, it is ill talking between a full man and a fasting."

He threw himself back on his seat, covered his brow with his hand, and was silent.

* The nature of Louis XIth's coarse humour may be guessed at by those who have perused the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, which are grosser than most similar collections of the age.

[The work is dedicated by its anonymous author to the Dauphin of France, afterwards Louis XI. It was first printed at Paris in 1486 by Anthoine Verard, and, according to Brunet, afterwards passed through ten editions.]

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CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

THE HALL OF ROLAND.

Painters show Cupid blind—Hath Hymen eyes?
Or is his sight warp'd by those spectacles
Which parents, guardians, and advisers, lend him,
That he may look through them on lands and mansions,
On jewels, gold, and all such rich dotations,
And see their value ten times magnified?—
Methinks 'twill brook a question.

THE MISERIES OF ENFORCED MARRIAGE.

LOUIS the XIth of France, though the sovereign in Europe who was fondest and most jealous of power, desired only its substantial enjoyment; and though he knew well enough, and at times exacted strictly, the observances due to his rank, was in general singularly careless of show.

In a prince of sounder moral qualities, the familiarity with which he invited subjects to his board—nay, occasionally sat at theirs—must have been highly popular; and even such as he was, the King's homeliness of manners atoned for many of his vices with that class of his subjects who were not particularly exposed to the consequences of his suspicion and jealousy. The *tiers état*, or commons of France, who rose to more opulence and consequence under the reign of this sagacious Prince, respected his person, though they loved him not; and it was resting on their support that he was enabled to make his party good against the hatred of the nobles, who conceived that he diminished the honour of the French crown, and obscured their own splendid privileges, by that very neglect of form which gratified the citizens and commons.

With patience, which most other princes would have considered as degrading, and not without a sense of amusement, the Monarch of France waited till his Life-guards-man had satisfied the keenness of a youthful appetite. It may be supposed, however, that Quentin had too much sense and prudence to put the royal patience to a long or tedious proof; and indeed he was repeatedly desirous to break off his repast ere Louis would permit him. "I see it in thine eye," he said, good-naturedly, "that thy courage is not half abated. Go on—God

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and Saint Dennis!—charge again. I tell thee that meat and mass" (crossing himself) "never hindered the work of a good Christian man. Take a cup of wine; but mind thou be cautious of the wine-pot—it is the vice of thy countrymen as well as of the English, who, lacking that folly, are the choicest soldiers ever wore armour. And now wash speedily—forget not thy *benedicite*, and follow me."

Quentin obeyed, and, conducted by a different, but as maze-like an approach as he had formerly passed, he followed Louis into the Hall of Roland.

"Take notice," said the King, imperatively, "thou hast never left this post—let that be thine answer to thy kinsman and comrades—and, hark thee, to bind the recollection on thy memory, I give thee this gold chain" (flinging on his arm one of considerable value). "If I go not brave myself, those whom I trust have ever the means to ruffle it with the best. But, when such chains as these bind not the tongue from wagging too freely, my gossip, L'Hermite, hath an amulet for the throat, which never fails to work a certain cure. And now attend.—No man, save Oliver or I myself, enters here this evening; but ladies will come hither, perhaps from the one extremity of the hall, perhaps from the other, perhaps one from each. You may answer if they address you, but, being on duty, your answer must be brief; and you must neither address them in your turn, nor engage in any prolonged discourse. But hearken to what they say. Thine ears as well as thy hands are mine—I have bought thee, body and soul. Therefore, if thou hearest aught of their conversation, thou must retain it in memory until it is communicated to me, and then forget it. And, now I think better on it, it will be best that thou pass for a Scottish recruit, who hath come straight down from his mountains, and hath not yet acquired our most Christian language.—Right.—So, if they speak to thee, thou wilt *not* answer—this will free you from embarrassment, and lead them to converse without regard to your presence. You understand me.—Farewell. Be wary, and thou hast a friend."

The King had scarce spoken these words ere he disappeared behind the arras, leaving Quentin to meditate on what he had seen and heard. The youth was in one of those situations from which it is pleasanter to look forward than to look back; for the reflection that he had been planted like a marksman in a thicket who watches for a stag, to take the life of the noble Count of

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Crèvecœur, had in it nothing ennobling. It was very true, that the King's measures seemed on this occasion merely cautionary and defensive; but how did the youth know but he might be soon commanded on some offensive operation of the same kind? This would be an unpleasant crisis, since it was plain, from the character of his master, that there would be destruction in refusing, while his honour told him there would be disgrace in complying. He turned his thoughts from this subject of reflection, with the sage consolation so often adopted by youth when prospective dangers intrude themselves on their mind, that it was time enough to think what was to be done when the emergence actually arrived, and that sufficient for the day was the evil thereof.

Quentin made use of this sedative reflection the more easily, that the last commands of the King had given him something more agreeable to think of than his own condition. The Lady of the Lute was certainly one of those to whom his attention was to be dedicated; and well in his mind did he promise to obey one part of the King's mandate, and listen with diligence to every word that might drop from her lips, that he might know if the magic of her conversation equalled that of her music. But with as much sincerity did he swear to himself, that no part of her discourse should be reported by him to the King, which might affect the fair speaker otherwise than favourably.

Meantime, there was no fear of his again slumbering on his post. Each passing breath of wind, which, finding its way through the open lattice, waved the old arras, sounded like the approach of the fair object of his expectation. He felt, in short, all that mysterious anxiety, and eagerness of expectation, which is always the companion of love, and sometimes hath a considerable share in creating it.

At length, a door actually creaked and jingled (for the doors even of palaces did not in the fifteenth century turn on their hinges so noiseless as ours); but, alas! it was not at that end of the hall from which the lute had been heard. It opened, however, and a female figure entered, followed by two others, whom she directed by a sign to remain without, while she herself came forward into the hall. By her imperfect and unequal gait, which showed to peculiar disadvantage as she traversed this long gallery, Quentin at once recognised the

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Princess Joan, and, with the respect which became his situation, drew himself up in a fitting attitude of silent vigilance, and lowered his weapon to her as she passed. She acknowledged the courtesy by a gracious inclination of her head, and he had an opportunity of seeing her countenance more distinctly than he had in the morning.

There was little in the features of this ill-fated Princess to atone for the misfortune of her shape and gait. Her face was, indeed, by no means disagreeable in itself, though destitute of beauty; and there was a meek expression of suffering patience in her large blue eyes, which were commonly fixed upon the ground. But besides that she was extremely pallid in complexion, her skin had the yellowish discoloured tinge which accompanies habitual bad health; and though her teeth were white and regular, her lips were thin and pale. The Princess had a profusion of flaxen hair, but it was so light-coloured, as to be almost of a bluish tinge; and her tire-woman, who doubtless considered the luxuriance of her mistress's tresses as a beauty, had not greatly improved matters, by arranging them in curls around her pale countenance, to which they added an expression almost corpse-like and unearthly. To make matters still worse, she had chosen a vest or cymar of a pale green silk, which gave her, on the whole, a ghastly and even spectral appearance.

While Quentin followed this singular apparition with eyes in which curiosity was blended with compassion, for every look and motion of the Princess seemed to call for the latter feeling, two ladies entered from the upper end of the apartment.

One of these was the young person, who, upon Louis's summons, had served him with fruit, while Quentin made his memorable breakfast at the Fleur-de-Lys. Invested now with all the mysterious dignity belonging to the nymph of the veil and lute, and proved, besides (at least in Quentin's estimation), to be the high-born heiress of a rich earldom, her beauty made ten times the impression upon him which it had done when he beheld in her one whom he deemed the daughter of a paltry innkeeper, in attendance upon a rich and humorous old burgher. He now wondered what fascination could ever have concealed from him her real character. Yet her dress was nearly as simple as before, being a suit of deep mourning, without any ornaments. Her head-dress was but a veil of crape, which was entirely thrown back, so as to leave her face uncovered; and it was

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only Quentin's knowledge of her actual rank, which gave in his estimation new elegance to her beautiful shape, a dignity to her step which had before remained unnoticed, and to her regular features, brilliant complexion, and dazzling eyes, an air of conscious nobleness, that enhanced their beauty.

Had death been the penalty, Durward must needs have rendered to this beauty and her companion the same homage which he had just paid to the royalty of the Princess. They received it as those who were accustomed to the deference of inferiors, and returned it with courtesy; but he thought—perhaps it was but a youthful vision—that the young lady coloured slightly, kept her eyes on the ground, and seemed embarrassed, though in a trifling degree, as she returned his military salutation. This must have been owing to her recollection of the audacious stranger in the neighbouring turret at the Fleur-de-Lys; but did that discomposure express displeasure? This question he had no means to determine.

The companion of the youthful Countess, dressed like herself simply, and in deep mourning, was at the age when women are apt to cling most closely to that reputation for beauty which has for years been diminishing. She had still remains enough to show what the power of her charms must once have been, and, remembering past triumphs, it was evident from her manner that she had not relinquished the pretensions to future conquests. She was tall and graceful, though somewhat haughty in her deportment, and returned the salute of Quentin with a smile of gracious condescension, whispering, the next instant, something into her companion's ear, who turned towards the soldier, as if to comply with some hint from the elder lady, but answered, nevertheless, without raising her eyes. Quentin could not help suspecting that the observation called on the young lady to notice his own good mien; and he was (I do not know why) pleased with the idea, that the party referred to did not choose to look at him, in order to verify with her own eyes the truth of the observation. Probably he thought there was already a sort of mysterious connection beginning to exist between them, which gave importance to the slightest trifle.

This reflection was momentary, for he was instantly wrapped up in attention to the meeting of the Princess Joan with these stranger ladies. She had stood still upon their entrance, in order to receive them, conscious, perhaps, that motion did not

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become her well; and as she was somewhat embarrassed in receiving and repaying their compliments, the elder stranger, ignorant of the rank of the party whom she addressed, was led to pay her salutation in a manner, rather as if she conferred than received an honour through the interview.

"I rejoice, madam," she said, with a smile, which was meant to express condescension at once and encouragement, "that we are at length permitted the society of such a respectable person of our own sex as you appear to be. I must say, that my niece and I have had but little for which to thank the hospitality of King Louis—Nay, niece, never pluck my sleeve—I am sure I read in the looks of this young lady sympathy for our situation.—Since we came hither, fair madam, we have been used little better than mere prisoners; and after a thousand invitations to throw our cause and our persons under the protection of France, the Most Christian King has afforded us at first but a base inn for our residence, and now a corner of this moth-eaten palace, out of which we are only permitted to creep towards sunset, as if we were bats or owls, whose appearance in the sunshine is to be held matter of ill omen."

"I am sorry," said the Princess, faltering with the awkward embarrassment of the interview, "that we have been unable, hitherto, to receive you according to your deserts.—Your niece, I trust, is better satisfied?"

"Much—much better than I can express," answered the youthful Countess—"I sought but safety, and I have found solitude and secrecy besides. The seclusion of our former residence, and the still greater solitude of that now assigned to us, augment, in my eye, the favour which the King vouchsafed to us unfortunate fugitives."

"Silence, my silly cousin," said the elder lady, "and let us speak according to our conscience, since at last we are alone with one of our own sex—I say alone, for that handsome young soldier is a mere statue, since he seems not to have the use of his limbs, and I am given to understand he wants that of his tongue, at least in civilised language—I say, since no one but this lady can understand us, I must own there is nothing I have regretted equal to taking this French journey. I looked for a splendid reception, tournaments, carousals, pageants, and festivals; and instead of which, all has been seclusion and obscurity! and the best society whom the King introduced to

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us, was a Bohemian vagabond, by whose agency he directed us to correspond with our friends in Flanders.—Perhaps," said the lady, "it is his politic intention to mew us up here until our lives' end, that he may seize on our estates, after the extinction of the ancient house of Croye. The Duke of Burgundy was not so cruel; he offered my niece a husband, though he was a bad one."

"I should have thought the veil preferable to an evil husband," said the Princess, with difficulty finding opportunity to interpose a word.

"One would at least wish to have the choice, madam," replied the voluble dame. "It is, Heaven knows, on account of my niece that I speak; for myself, I have long laid aside thoughts of changing my condition. I see you smile, but, by my halidome, it is true—yet that is no excuse for the King, whose conduct, like his person, hath more resemblance to that of old Michaud, the money-changer of Ghent, than to the successor of Charlemagne."

"Hold!" said the Princess, with some asperity in her tone; "remember you speak of my father."

"Of your father!" replied the Burgundian lady, in surprise.

"Of my father," repeated the Princess, with dignity. "I am Joan of France.—But fear not, madam," she continued, in the gentle accent which was natural to her, "you designed no offence, and I have taken none. Command my influence to render your exile and that of this interesting young person more supportable. Alas! it is but little I have in my power; but it is willingly offered."

Deep and submissive was the reverence with which the Countess Hameline de Croye, so was the elder lady called, received the obliging offer of the Princess's protection. She had been long the inhabitant of Courts, was mistress of the manners which are there acquired, and held firmly the established rule of courtiers of all ages, who, although their usual private conversation turns upon the vices and follies of their patrons, and on the injuries and neglect which they themselves have sustained, never suffer such hints to drop from them in the presence of the Sovereign or those of his family. The lady was therefore scandalised to the last degree at the mistake which had induced her to speak so indecorously in presence of the daughter of Louis. She would have exhausted herself in

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expressing regret and making apologies, had she not been put to silence and restored to equanimity by the Princess, who requested, in the most gentle manner, yet which, from a Daughter of France, had the weight of a command, that no more might be said in the way either of excuse or of explanation.

The Princess Joan then took her own chair with a dignity which became her, and compelled the two strangers to sit, one on either hand, to which the younger consented with unfeigned and respectful diffidence, and the elder with an affectation of deep humility and deference, which was intended for such. They spoke together, but in such a low tone, that the sentinel could not overhear their discourse, and only remarked, that the Princess seemed to bestow much of her regard on the younger and more interesting lady; and that the Countess Hameline, though speaking a great deal more, attracted less of the Princess's attention by her full flow of conversation and compliment, than did her kinswoman by her brief and modest replies to what was addressed to her.

The conversation of the ladies had not lasted a quarter of an hour, when the door at the lower end of the hall opened, and a man entered shrouded in a riding-cloak. Mindful of the King's injunction, and determined not to be a second time caught slumbering, Quentin instantly moved towards the intruder, and, interposing between him and the ladies, requested him to retire instantly.

"By whose command?" said the stranger, in a tone of contemptuous surprise.

"By that of the King," said Quentin, firmly, "which I am placed here to enforce."

"Not against Louis of Orleans," said the Duke, dropping his cloak.

The young man hesitated a moment; but how enforce his orders against the first Prince of the blood, about to be allied, as the report now generally went, with the King's own family?

"Your Highness," he said, "is too great that your pleasure should be withstood by me. I trust your Highness will bear me witness that I have done the duty of my post, so far as your will permitted."

"Go to—you shall have no blame, young soldier," said Orleans; and passing forward, paid his compliments to the

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Princess, with that air of constraint which always marked his courtesy when addressing her.

"He had been dining," he said, "with Dunois, and understanding there was society in Roland's Gallery, he had ventured on the freedom of adding one to the number."

The colour which mounted into the pale cheek of the unfortunate Joan, and which for the moment spread something of beauty over her features, evinced that this addition to the company was anything but indifferent to her. She hastened to present the Prince to the two Ladies of Croye, who received him with the respect due to his eminent rank; and the Princess, pointing to a chair, requested him to join their conversation party.

The Duke declined the freedom of assuming a seat in such society; but taking a cushion from one of the settles, he laid it at the feet of the beautiful young Countess of Croye, and so seated himself, that, without appearing to neglect the Princess, he was enabled to bestow the greater share of his attention on her lovely neighbour.

At first, it seemed as if this arrangement rather pleased than offended his destined bride. She encouraged the Duke in his gallantries towards the fair stranger, and seemed to regard them as complimentary to herself. But the Duke of Orleans, though accustomed to subject his mind to the stern yoke of his uncle when in the King's presence, had enough of princely nature to induce him to follow his own inclinations whenever that restraint was withdrawn; and his high rank giving him a right to overstep the ordinary ceremonies, and advance at once to familiarity, his praises of the Countess Isabelle's beauty became so energetic, and flowed with such unrestrained freedom, owing perhaps to his having drunk a little more wine than usual—for Dunois was no enemy to the worship of Bacchus—that at length he seemed almost impassioned, and the presence of the Princess appeared well-nigh forgotten.

The tone of compliment which he indulged was grateful only to one individual in the circle; for the Countess Hameline already anticipated the dignity of an alliance with the first Prince of the blood, by means of her whose birth, beauty, and large possessions, rendered such an ambitious consummation by no means impossible, even in the eyes of a less sanguine projector, could the views of Louis XI. have been left out of the

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calculation of chances. The younger Countess listened to the Duke's gallantries with anxiety and embarrassment, and ever and anon turned an entreating look towards the Princess, as if requesting her to come to her relief. But the wounded feelings, and the timidity of Joan of France, rendered her incapable of an effort to make the conversation more general; and at length, excepting a few interjectional civilities of the Lady Hameline, it was maintained almost exclusively by the Duke himself, though at the expense of the younger Countess of Croye, whose beauty formed the theme of his high-flown eloquence.

Nor must I forget that there was a third person, the unregarded sentinel, who saw his fair visions melt away like wax before the sun, as the Duke persevered in the warm tenor of his passionate discourse. At length the Countess Isabelle de Croye made a determined effort to cut short what was becoming intolerably disagreeable to her, especially from the pain to which the conduct of the Duke was apparently subjecting the Princess.

Addressing the latter, she said, modestly, but with some firmness, that the first boon she had to claim from her promised protection was, "that her Highness would undertake to convince the Duke of Orleans, that the ladies of Burgundy, though inferior in wit and manners to those of France, were not such absolute fools as to be pleased with no other conversation than that of extravagant compliment."

"I grieve, lady," said the Duke, preventing the Princess's answer, "that you will satirise, in the same sentence, the beauty of the dames of Burgundy and the sincerity of the Knights of France. If we are hasty and extravagant in the expression of our admiration, it is because we love as we fight, without letting cold deliberation come into our bosoms, and surrender to the fair with the same rapidity with which we defeat the valiant."

"The beauty of our countrywomen," said the young Countess, with more of reproof than she had yet ventured to use towards the high-born suitor, "is as unfit to claim such triumphs, as the valour of the men of Burgundy is incapable of yielding them."

"I respect your patriotism, Countess," said the Duke; "and the last branch of your theme shall not be impugned by me, till a Burgundian knight shall offer to sustain it with lance in

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rest. But for the injustice which you have done to the charms which your land produces, I appeal from yourself to yourself.—Look there," he said, pointing to a large mirror, the gift of the Venetian republic, and then of the highest rarity and value, "and tell me, as you look, what is the heart that can resist the charms there represented?"

The Princess, unable to sustain any longer the neglect of her lover, here sunk backwards on her chair, with a sigh, which at once recalled the Duke from the land of romance, and induced the Lady Hameline to ask whether her Highness found herself ill.

"A sudden pain shot through my forehead," said the Princess, attempting to smile; "but I shall be presently better."

Her increasing paleness contradicted her words, and induced the Lady Hameline to call for assistance, as the Princess was about to faint.

The Duke, biting his lip, and cursing the folly which could not keep guard over his tongue, ran to summon the Princess's attendants, who were in the next chamber: and when they came hastily, with the usual remedies, he could not but, as a cavalier and gentleman, give his assistance to support and to recover her. His voice, rendered almost tender by pity and self-reproach, was the most powerful means of recalling her to herself, and just as the swoon was passing away, the King himself entered the apartment.

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

THE POLITICIAN.

This is a lecturer, so skill'd in policy,
That (no disparagement to Satan's cunning)
He well might read a lesson to the devil,
And teach the old seducer new temptations.

OLD PLAY.

As Louis entered the Gallery, he bent his brows in the manner we have formerly described as peculiar to him, and sent, from under his gathered and gloomy eyebrows, a keen

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look on all around; in darting which, as Quentin afterwards declared, his eyes seemed to turn so small, so fierce, and so piercing, as to resemble those of an aroused adder looking through the bush of heath in which he lies coiled.

When, by this momentary and sharpened glance, the King had reconnoitered the cause of the bustle which was in the apartment, his first address was to the Duke of Orleans.

"You here, my fair cousin?" he said;—and, turning to Quentin, added sternly, "Had you not charge?"

"Forgive the young man, Sire," said the Duke; "he did not neglect his duty; but I was informed that the Princess was in this gallery."

"And I warrant you would not be withstood when you came hither to pay your court," said the King, whose detestable hypocrisy persisted in representing the Duke as participating in a passion which was felt only on the side of his unhappy daughter; "and it is thus you debauch the sentinels of my guard, young man?—But what cannot be pardoned to a gallant who only lives *par amours!*"

The Duke of Orleans raised his head, as if about to reply, in some manner which might correct the opinion conveyed in the King's observation; but the instinctive reverence, not to say fear, of Louis, in which he had been bred from childhood, chained up his voice.

"And Joan hath been ill?" said the King; "but do not be grieved, Louis; it will soon pass away; lend her your arm to her apartment, while I will conduct these strange ladies to theirs."

The order was given in a tone which amounted to a command, and Orleans accordingly made his exit with the Princess at one extremity of the gallery, while the King, ungloving his right hand, courteously handed the Countess Isabelle and her kinswoman to their apartment, which opened from the other. He bowed profoundly as they entered, and remained standing on the threshold for a minute after they had disappeared; then, with great composure, shut the door by which they had retired, and turning the huge key, took it from the lock, and put it into his girdle—an appendage which gave him still more perfectly the air of some old miser, who cannot journey in comfort unless he bear with him the key of his treasure closet.

With slow and pensive step, and eyes fixed on the ground,

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Louis now paced towards Quentin Durward, who, expecting his share of the royal displeasure, viewed his approach with no little anxiety.

"Thou hast done wrong," said the King, raising his eyes, and fixing them firmly on him when he had come within a yard of him,—"thou hast done foul wrong, and deservest to die.—Speak not a word in defence!—What hadst thou to do with Dukes or Princesses?—what with *any* thing but my order?"

"So please your Majesty," said the young soldier, "what could I do?"

"What couldst thou do when thy post was forcibly passed?" answered the King, scornfully,—"what is the use of that weapon on thy shoulder? Thou shouldst have levelled thy piece, and if the presumptuous rebel did not retire on the instant, he should have died within this very hall! Go—pass into these farther apartments. In the first thou wilt find a large staircase, which leads to the inner Bailley; there thou wilt find Oliver Dain. Send him to me—do thou begone to thy quarters.—As thou dost value thy life, be not so loose of thy tongue as thou hast been this day slack of thy hand."

Well pleased to escape so easily, yet with a soul which revolted at the cold-blooded cruelty which the King seemed to require from him in the execution of his duty, Durward took the road indicated, hastened down stairs, and communicated the royal pleasure to Oliver, who was waiting in the court beneath. The wily tonsor bowed, sighed, and smiled, as, with a voice even softer than ordinary, he wished the youth a good evening; and they parted, Quentin to his quarters, and Oliver to attend the King.

In this place, the Memoirs which we have chiefly followed in compiling this true history, were unhappily defective; for, founded chiefly on information supplied by Quentin, they do not convey the purport of the dialogue which, in his absence, took place between the King and his secret counsellor. Fortunately the Library of Hautlieu contains a manuscript copy of the *Chronique Scandaleuse* of Jean de Troyes, much more full than that which has been printed; to which are added several curious memoranda, which we incline to think must have been written down by Oliver himself after the death of his master, and before he had the happiness to be rewarded with the halter which he

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had so long merited. From this we have been able to extract a very full account of the obscure favourite's conversation with Louis upon the present occasion, which throws a light upon the policy of that Prince, which we might otherwise have sought for in vain.

When the favourite attendant entered the Gallery of Roland, he found the King pensively seated upon the chair which his daughter had left some minutes before. Well acquainted with his temper, he glided on with his noiseless step until he had just crossed the line of the King's sight, so as to make him aware of his presence, then shrank modestly backward and out of sight, until he should be summoned to speak or to listen. The monarch's first address was an unpleasant one:—"So, Oliver, your fine schemes are melting like snow before the south wind!—I pray to our Lady of Embrun that they resemble not the ice-heaps of which the Switzer churls tell such stories, and come rushing down upon our heads."

"I have heard with concern that all is not well, Sire," answered Oliver.

"Not well!" exclaimed the King, rising and hastily marching up and down the gallery,—"All is ill, man—and as ill nearly as possible:—so much for thy fond romantic advice, that I, of all men, should become a protector of distressed damsels! I tell thee Burgundy is arming, and on the eve of closing an alliance with England. And Edward, who hath his hands idle at home, will pour his thousands upon us through that unhappy gate of Calais. Singly, I might cajole or defy them; but united, united—and with the discontent and treachery of that villain Saint Paul!—All thy fault, Oliver, who counselled me to receive the women, and to use the services of that damned Bohemian to carry messages to their vassals."

"My lord," said Oliver, "you know my reasons. The Countess's domains lie between the frontiers of Burgundy and Flanders—her castle is almost impregnable—her rights over neighbouring estates are such as, if well supported, cannot but give much annoyance to Burgundy, were the lady but wedded to one who should be friendly to France."

"It is, it *is* a tempting bait," said the King; "and could we have concealed her being here, we might have arranged such a marriage for this rich heiress, as would have highly profited France.—But that cursed Bohemian, how couldst thou recom-

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mend such a heathen hound for a commission which required trust?"

"Please you," said Oliver, "to remember it was your Grace's self who trusted him too far—much farther than I recommended. He would have borne a letter trustily enough to the Countess's kinsman, telling him to hold out her castle, and promising speedy relief; but your Highness must needs put his prophetic powers to the test; and thus he became possessed of secrets which were worth betraying to Duke Charles."

"I am ashamed, I am ashamed," said Louis. "And yet, Oliver, they say that these heathen people are descended from the sage Chaldeans, who did read the mysteries of the stars in the plains of Shinar."

Well aware that his master, with all his acuteness and sagacity, was but the more prone to be deceived by soothsayers, astrologers, diviners, and all that race of pretenders to occult science, and that he even conceived himself to have some skill in these arts, Oliver dared to press this point no farther; and only observed that the Bohemian had been a bad prophet on his own account, else he would have avoided returning to Tours, and saved himself from the gallows he had merited.

"It often happens that those who are gifted with prophetic knowledge," answered Louis, with much gravity, "have not the power of foreseeing those events in which they themselves are personally interested."

"Under your Majesty's favour," replied the confidant, "that seems as if a man could not see his own hand by means of the candle which he holds, and which shows him every other object in the apartment."

"He cannot see his own features by the light which shows the faces of others," replied Louis; "and that is the more faithful illustration of the case.—But this is foreign to my purpose at present. The Bohemian hath had his reward, and peace be with him.—But these ladies—Not only does Burgundy threaten us with war for harbouring them, but their presence is likely to interfere with my projects in my own family. My simple cousin of Orleans hath barely seen this damsel, and I venture to prophesy that the sight of her is like to make him less pliable in the matter of his alliance with Joan."

"Your Majesty," answered the counsellor, "may send the

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Ladies of Croye back to Burgundy, and so make your peace with the Duke. Many might murmur at this as dishonourable; but if necessity demands the sacrifice"——

"If profit demanded the sacrifice, Oliver, the sacrifice should be made without hesitation," answered the King. "I am an old experienced salmon, and use not to gulp the angler's hook because it is busked up with a feather called honour. But what is worse than a lack of honour, there were, in returning those ladies to Burgundy, a forfeiture of those views of advantage which moved us to give them an asylum. It were heart-breaking to renounce the opportunity of planting a friend to ourselves, and an enemy to Burgundy, in the very centre of his dominions, and so near to the discontented cities of Flanders. Oliver, I cannot relinquish the advantages which our scheme of marrying the maiden to a friend of our own house seems to hold out to us."

"Your Majesty," said Oliver, after a moment's thought, "might confer her hand on some right trusty friend, who would take all blame on himself, and serve your Majesty secretly, while in public you might disown him."

"And where am I to find such a friend?" said Louis. "Were I to bestow her upon any one of our mutinous and ill-ruled nobles, would it not be rendering him independent? and hath it not been my policy for years to prevent them from becoming so?—Dunois indeed—him, and him only, I might perchance trust.—He would fight for the crown of France, whatever were his condition. But honours and wealth change men's natures—Even Dunois I will not trust."

"Your Majesty may find others," said Oliver, in his smoothest manner, and in a tone more insinuating than that which he usually employed in conversing with the King, who permitted him considerable freedom; "men dependent entirely on your own grace and favour, and who could no more exist without your countenance than without sun or air—men rather of head than of action—men who"——

"Men who resemble thyself, ha!" said King Louis.—"No, Oliver, by my faith that arrow was too rashly shot!—What! because I indulge thee with my confidence, and let thee, in reward, poll my lieges a little now and then, dost thou think it makes thee fit to be the husband of that beautiful vision, and a Count of the highest class to the boot?—thee—thee, I say, low-

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born, and lower-bred, whose wisdom is at best a sort of cunning, and whose courage is more than doubtful?"

"Your Majesty imputes to me a presumption of which I am not guilty, in supposing me to aspire so highly," said Oliver.

"I am glad to hear it, man," replied the King; "and truly, I hold your judgment the healthier that you disown such a reverie. But methinks thy speech sounded strangely in that key.—Well, to return.—I dare not wed this beauty to one of my subjects—I dare not return her to Burgundy—I dare not transmit her to England, or to Germany, where she is likely to become the prize of some one more apt to unite with Burgundy than with France, and who would be more ready to discourage the honest malcontents in Ghent and Liege, than to yield them that wholesome countenance which might always find Charles the Hardy enough to exercise his valour on, without stirring from his own domains—and they were in so ripe a humour for insurrection, the men of Liege in especial, that they alone, well heated and supported, would find my fair cousin work for more than a twelvemonth;—and backed by a warlike Count of Croye,—Oh, Oliver! the plan is too hopeful to be resigned without a struggle.—Cannot thy fertile brain devise some scheme?"

Oliver paused for a long time—then at last replied, "What if a bridal could be accomplished betwixt Isabelle of Croye, and young Adolphus, the Duke of Gueldres?"

"What!" said the King, in astonishment; "sacrifice her, and she, too, so lovely a creature, to the furious wretch who deposed, imprisoned, and has often threatened to murder, his own father!—No, Oliver, no—that were too unutterably cruel even for you and me, who look so steadfastly to our excellent end, the peace and welfare of France, and respect so little the means by which it is attained. Besides, he lies distant from us, and is detested by the people of Ghent and Liege.—No, no—I will none of Adolphus of Gueldres—think on some one else."

"My invention is exhausted, Sire," said the counsellor; "I can remember no one who, as husband to the Countess of Croye, would be likely to answer your Majesty's views. He must unite such various qualities—a friend to your Majesty—an enemy to Burgundy—of policy enough to conciliate the Gauntois and Liegeois, and of valour sufficient to defend his little dominions against the power of Duke Charles—Of noble birth besides—

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that your Highness insists upon; and of excellent and most virtuous character, to the boot of all."

"Nay, Oliver," said the King, "I leaned not so much—that is, so *very* much, on character; but methinks Isabelle's bridegroom should be something less publicly and generally abhorred than Adolphus of Gueldres.—For example, since I myself must suggest some one,—why not William de la Marck?"

"On my halidome, Sire," said Oliver, "I cannot complain of your demanding too high a standard of moral excellence in the happy man, if the Wild Boar of Ardennes can serve your turn. De La Marck!—why, he is the most notorious robber and murderer on all the frontiers—excommunicated by the Pope for a thousand crimes."

"We will have him released from the sentence, friend Oliver, —Holy Church is merciful."

"Almost an outlaw," continued Oliver, "and under the ban of the Empire, by an ordinance of the Chamber at Ratisbon."

"We will have the ban taken off, friend Oliver," continued the King, in the same tone; "the Imperial Chamber will hear reason."

"And admitting him to be of noble birth," said Oliver, "he hath the manners, the face, and the outward form, as well as the heart of a Flemish butcher—she will never accept of him."

"His mode of wooing, if I mistake him not," said Louis, "will render it difficult for her to make a choice."

"I was far wrong indeed, when I taxed your Majesty with being over scrupulous," said the counsellor. "On my life, the crimes of Adolphus are but virtues to those of De la Marck!—And then how is he to meet with his bride?—Your Majesty knows he dare not stir far from his own Forest of Ardennes."

"That must be cared for," said the King; "and, in the first place, the two ladies must be acquainted privately that they can be no longer maintained at this Court, except at the expense of a war between France and Burgundy, and that, unwilling to deliver them up to my fair cousin of Burgundy, I am desirous they should secretly depart from my dominions."

"They will demand to be conveyed to England," said Oliver; "and we shall have her return to Flanders with an island lord, having a round fair face, long brown hair, and three thousand archers at his back."

"No—no," replied the King; "we dare not (you understand

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me) so far offend our fair cousin of Burgundy as to let her pass to England. It would bring his displeasure as certainly as our maintaining her here. No, no—to the safety of the Church alone we will venture to commit her; and the utmost we can do is to connive at the Ladies Hameline and Isabelle de Croye departing in disguise, and with a small retinue, to take refuge with the Bishop of Liege, who will place the fair Isabelle for the time under the safeguard of a convent."

"And if that convent protect her from William de la Marck, when he knows of your Majesty's favourable intentions, I have mistaken the man."

"Why, yes," answered the King, "thanks to our secret supplies of money, De la Marck hath together a handsome handful of as unscrupulous soldiery as ever were outlawed; with which he contrives to maintain himself among the woods, in such a condition as makes him formidable both to the Duke of Burgundy and the Bishop of Liege. He lacks nothing but some territory which he may call his own; and this being so fair an opportunity to establish himself by marriage, I think that, *Pasques-dieu!* he will find means to win and wed, without more than a hint on our part. The Duke of Burgundy will then have such a thorn in his side, as no lancet of our time will easily cut out from his flesh. The Boar of Ardennes, whom he has already outlawed, strengthened by the possession of that fair lady's lands, castles, and seigniory, with the discontented Liegeois to boot, who, by my faith, will not be in that case unwilling to choose him for their captain and leader—let Charles then think of wars with France when he will, or rather let him bless his stars if she war not with him.—How dost thou like the scheme, Oliver, ha?"

"Rarely," said Oliver, "save and except the doom which confers that lady on the Wild Boar of Ardennes.—By my halidome, saving in a little outward show of gallantry, Tristan, the Provost-Marshal, were the more proper bridegroom of the two."

"Anon thou didst propose Master Oliver the barber," said Louis; "but friend Oliver and gossip Tristan, though excellent men in the way of counsel and execution, are not the stuff that men make Counts of. Know you not that the burghers of Flanders value birth in other men, precisely because they have it not themselves?—A plebeian mob ever desire an aristocratic leader. Yonder Ked, or Cade, or—how called they him?—in

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England, was fain to lure his rascal rout after him, by pretending to the blood of the Mortimers. William de la Marck comes of the blood of the Princes of Sedan, as noble as mine own.—And now to business. I must determine the Ladies of Croye to a speedy and secret flight, under sure guidance. This will be easily done—we have but to hint the alternative of surrendering them to Burgundy. Thou must find means to let William de la Marck know of their motions, and let him choose his own time and place to push his suit. I know a fit person to travel with them."

"May I ask to whom your Majesty commits such an important charge?" asked the tonsor.

"To a foreigner, be sure," replied the King; "one who has neither kin nor interest in France, to interfere with the execution of my pleasure; and who knows too little of the country, and its factions, to suspect more of my purpose than I choose to tell him—in a word, I design to employ the young Scot who sent you hither but now."

Oliver paused in a manner which seemed to imply a doubt of the prudence of the choice, and then added, "Your Majesty has reposed confidence in that stranger boy earlier than is your wont."

"I have my reason," answered the King.—"Thou knowest" (and he crossed himself) "my devotion for the blessed Saint Julian. I had been saying my orisons to that holy Saint late in the night before last, wherein (as he is known to be the guardian of travellers) I made it my humble petition that he would augment my household with such wandering foreigners, as might best establish throughout our kingdom unlimited devotion to our will; and I vowed to the good Saint in guerdon, that I would, in his name, receive, and relieve, and maintain them."

"And did Saint Julian," said Oliver, "send your Majesty this long-legged importation from Scotland in answer to your prayers?"

Although the barber, who well knew that his master had superstition in a large proportion to his want of religion, and that on such topics nothing was more easy than to offend him—although, I say, he knew the royal weakness, and therefore carefully put the preceding question in the softest and most simple tone of voice, Louis felt the innuendo which it contained, and regarded the speaker with high displeasure.

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"Sirrah," he said, "thou art well called Oliver the Devil, who darest thus to sport at once with thy master and with the blessed Saints. I tell thee, wert thou one grain less necessary to me, I would have thee hung up on yonder oak before the Castle, as an example to all who scoff at things holy!—Know, thou infidel slave, that mine eyes were no sooner closed, than the blessed Saint Julian was visible to me, leading a young man, whom he presented to me, saying, that his fortune should be to escape the sword, the cord, the river, and to bring good fortune to the side which he should espouse, and to the adventures in which he should be engaged. I walked out on the succeeding morning, and I met with this youth, whose image I had seen in my dream. In his own country he hath escaped the sword, amid the massacre of his whole family, and here, within the brief compass of two days, he hath been strangely rescued from drowning and from the gallows, and hath already, on a particular occasion, as I but lately hinted to thee, been of the most material service to me. I receive him as sent hither by Saint Julian, to serve me in the most difficult, the most dangerous, and even the most desperate services."

The King, as he thus expressed himself, doffed his hat, and selecting from the numerous little leaden figures with which the hat-band was garnished, that which represented Saint Julian, he placed it on the table, as was often his wont when some peculiar feeling of hope, or perhaps of remorse, happened to thrill across his mind, and kneeling down before it, muttered, with an appearance of profound devotion, "*Sancte Juliane, adsis precibus nostris! Ora, ora, pro nobis!*"

This was one of those ague-fits of superstitious devotion which often seized on Louis in such extraordinary times and places, that they gave one of the most sagacious Monarchs who ever reigned, the appearance of a madman, or at least of one whose mind was shaken by some deep consciousness of guilt.

While he was thus employed, his favourite looked at him with an expression of sarcastic contempt, which he scarce attempted to disguise. Indeed, it was one of this man's peculiarities, that, in his whole intercourse with his master, he laid aside that fondling, purring affectation of officiousness and humility, which distinguished his conduct to others; and if he still bore some resemblance to a cat, it was when the animal is on its guard,—watchful, animated, and alert for sudden exer-

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tion. The cause of this change was probably Oliver's consciousness, that his master was himself too profound a hypocrite not to see through the hypocrisy of others.

"The features of this youth, then, if I may presume to speak," said Oliver, "resemble those of him whom your dream exhibited?"

"Closely and intimately," said the King, whose imagination, like that of superstitious people in general, readily imposed upon itself—"I have had his horoscope cast, besides, by Galeotti Martivalle, and I have plainly learned, through his art and mine own observation, that, in many respects, this unfriended youth has his destiny under the same constellation with mine."

Whatever Oliver might think of the causes thus boldly assigned for the preference of an unexperienced stripling, he dared make no farther objections, well knowing that Louis, who, while residing in exile, had bestowed much of his attention on the supposed science of judicial astrology, would listen to no raillery of any kind which impeached his skill. He therefore only replied, that he trusted the youth would prove faithful in the discharge of a task so delicate.

"We will take care he hath no opportunity to be otherwise," said Louis; "for he shall be privy to nothing, save that he is sent to escort the Ladies of Croye to the residence of the Bishop of Liege. Of the probable interference of William de la Marck, he shall know as little as they themselves. None shall know that secret but the guide; and Tristan or thou must find one fit for our purpose."

"But in that case," said Oliver, "judging of him from his country and his appearance, the young man is like to stand to his arms so soon as the Wild Boar comes on them, and may not come off so easily from the tusks as he did this morning."

"If they rend his heart-strings," said Louis, composedly, "Saint Julian, blessed be his name! can send me another in his stead. It skills as little that the messenger is slain after his duty is executed, as that the flask is broken when the wine is drunk out.—Meanwhile, we must expedite the ladies' departure, and then persuade the Count de Crèvecœur that it has taken place without our connivance; we having been desirous to restore them to the custody of our fair cousin, which their sudden departure has unhappily prevented."

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"The Count is perhaps too wise, and his master too prejudiced, to believe it."

"Holy Mother!" said Louis, "what unbelief would that be in Christian men! But, Oliver, they *shall* believe us. We will throw into our whole conduct towards our fair cousin, Duke Charles, such thorough and unlimited confidence, that not to believe we have been sincere with him in every respect, he must be worse than an infidel. I tell thee, so convinced am I that I could make Charles of Burgundy think of me in every respect as I would have him, that, were it necessary for silencing his doubts, I would ride unarmed, and on a palfrey, to visit him in his tent, with no better guard about me than thine own simple person, friend Oliver."

"And I," said Oliver, "though I pique not myself upon managing steel in any other shape than that of a razor, would rather charge a Swiss battalion of pikes, than I would accompany your Highness upon such a visit of friendship to Charles of Burgundy, when he hath so many grounds to be well assured that there is enmity in your Majesty's bosom against him."

"Thou art a fool, Oliver," said the King, "with all thy pretensions to wisdom—and art not aware that deep policy must often assume the appearance of the most extreme simplicity, as courage occasionally shrouds itself under the show of modest timidity. Were it needful, full surely would I do what I have said—the Saints always blessing our purpose, and the heavenly constellations bringing round in their course a proper conjuncture for such an exploit."

In these words did King Louis XI. give the first hint of the extraordinary resolution which he afterwards adopted, in order to dupe his great rival, the subsequent execution of which had very nearly proved his own ruin.

He parted with his counsellor, and presently afterwards went to the apartment of the Ladies of Croye. Few persuasions beyond his mere license would have been necessary to determine their retreat from the Court of France, upon the first hint that they might not be eventually protected against the Duke of Burgundy; but it was not so easy to induce them to choose Liege for the place of their retreat. They entreated and requested to be transferred to Bretagne or Calais, where, under protection of the Duke of Bretagne, or King of England, they

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might remain in a state of safety, until the Sovereign of Burgundy should relent in his rigorous purpose towards them. But neither of these places of safety at all suited the plans of Louis, and he was at last successful in inducing them to adopt that which did coincide with them.

The power of the Bishop of Liege for their defence was not to be questioned, since his ecclesiastical dignity gave him the means of protecting the fugitives against all Christian Princes; while, on the other hand, his secular forces, if not numerous, seemed at least sufficient to defend his person, and all under his protection, from any sudden violence. The difficulty was to reach the little Court of the Bishop in safety; but for this Louis promised to provide, by spreading a report that the Ladies of Croye had escaped from Tours by night, under fear of being delivered up to the Burgundian Envoy, and had taken their flight towards Bretagne. He also promised them the attendance of a small but faithful retinue, and letters to the commanders of such towns and fortresses as they might pass, with instructions to use every means for protecting and assisting them in their journey.

The Ladies of Croye, though internally resenting the ungenerous and discourteous manner in which Louis thus deprived them of the promised asylum in his Court, were so far from objecting to the hasty departure which he proposed, that they even anticipated his project, by entreating to be permitted to set forward that same night. The Lady Hameline was already tired of a place where there were neither admiring courtiers, nor festivities to be witnessed; and the Lady Isabelle thought she had seen enough to conclude, that were the temptation to become a little stronger, Louis XI., not satisfied with expelling them from his Court, would not hesitate to deliver her up to her irritated Suzerain, the Duke of Burgundy. Lastly, Louis himself readily acquiesced in their hasty departure, anxious to preserve peace with Duke Charles, and alarmed lest the beauty of Isabelle should interfere with and impede the favourite plan which he had formed, for bestowing the hand of his daughter Joan upon his cousin of Orleans.

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CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

THE JOURNEY.

Talk not of kings—I scorn the poor comparison;
I am a SAGE, and can command the elements—
At least men think I can; and on that thought
I found unbounded empire.

ALBUMAZAR.

OCCUPATION and adventure might be said to crowd upon the young Scottishman with the force of a spring-tide; for he was speedily summoned to the apartment of his Captain, the Lord Crawford, where, to his astonishment, he again beheld the King. After a few words respecting the honour and trust which were about to be reposed in him, which made Quentin internally afraid that they were again about to propose to him such a watch as he had kept upon the Count of Crèvecœur, or perhaps some duty still more repugnant to his feelings, he was not relieved merely, but delighted, with hearing that he was selected, with the assistance of four others under his command, one of whom was a guide, to escort the Ladies of Croye to the little Court of their relative, the Bishop of Liege, in the safest and most commodious, and, at the same time, in the most secret manner possible. A scroll was given him, in which were set down directions for his guidance, for the places of halt (generally chosen in obscure villages, solitary monasteries, and situations remote from towns), and for the general precautions which he was to attend to, especially on approaching the frontier of Burgundy. He was sufficiently supplied with instructions what he ought to say and do to sustain the personage of the Maître d'Hôtel of two English ladies of rank, who had been on a pilgrimage to Saint Martin of Tours, and were about to visit the holy city of Cologne, and worship the relics of the sage Eastern Monarchs, who came to adore the nativity of Bethlehem; for under that character the Ladies of Croye were to journey.

Without having any defined notions of the cause of his delight, Quentin Durward's heart leapt for joy at the idea of approaching thus nearly to the person of the Beauty of the Turret, and in a situation which entitled him to her confidence, since her protec-

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tion was in so great a degree intrusted to his conduct and courage. He felt no doubt in his own mind, that he should be her successful guide through the hazards of her pilgrimage. Youth seldom thinks of dangers, and bred up free, and fearless, and self-confiding, Quentin, in particular, only thought of them to defy them. He longed to be exempted from the restraint of the Royal presence, that he might indulge the secret glee with which such unexpected tidings filled him, and which prompted him to bursts of delight which would have been totally unfitting for that society.

But Louis had not yet done with him. That cautious Monarch had to consult a counsellor of a different stamp from Oliver le Diable, and who was supposed to derive his skill from the superior and astral intelligences, as men, judging from their fruits, were apt to think the counsels of Oliver sprung from the Devil himself.

Louis therefore led the way, followed by the impatient Quentin, to a separate tower of the Castle of Plessis, in which was installed, in no small ease and splendour, the celebrated astrologer, poet, and philosopher, Galeotti Marti, or Martius, or Martivalle, a native of Narni, in Italy, the author of the famous Treatise, *De Vulgo Incognitis*,* and the subject of his age's admiration, and of the panegyrics of Paulus Jovius. He had long flourished at the court of the celebrated Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary,† from whom he was in some measure decoyed by Louis, who grudged the Hungarian Monarch the society and the counsels of a sage, accounted so skilful in reading the decrees of Heaven.

Martivalle was none of those ascetic, withered, pale professors of mystic learning of those days, who bleared their eyes over the midnight furnace, and macerated their bodies by outwatching the polar bear. He indulged in all courtly pleasures, and, until he grew corpulent, had excelled in all martial sports and gymnastic exercises, as well as in the use of arms; insomuch, that Janus Pannonius has left a Latin epigram, upon a wrestling match betwixt Galeotti and a renowned champion of that art, in the presence of the Hungarian King and Court, in which the Astrologer was completely victorious.

The apartments of this courtly and martial sage were far

* Concerning things unknown to the generality of mankind.

† See Note H.

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more splendidly furnished than any which Quentin had yet seen in the royal palace; and the carving and ornamented woodwork of his library, as well as the magnificence displayed in the tapestries, showed the elegant taste of the learned Italian. Out of his study one door opened to his sleeping-apartment, another led to the turret which served as his observatory. A large oaken table, in the midst of the chamber, was covered with a rich Turkey carpet, the spoils of the tent of a Pacha, after the great battle of Jaiza, where the Astrologer had fought abreast with the valiant champion of Christendom, Matthias Corvinus. On the table lay a variety of mathematical and astrological instruments, all of the most rich materials and curious workmanship. His astrolabe of silver was the gift of the Emperor of Germany, and his Jacob's staff of ebony, jointed with gold, and curiously inlaid, was a mark of esteem from the reigning Pope.

There were various other miscellaneous articles disposed on the table, or hanging around the walls; amongst others, two complete suits of armour, one of mail, the other of plate, both of which, from their great size, seemed to call the gigantic Astrologer their owner; a Spanish toledo, a Scottish broadsword, a Turkish scimitar, with bows, quivers, and other warlike weapons; musical instruments of several different kinds; a silver crucifix, a sepulchral antique vase, and several of the little brazen Penates of the ancient heathens, with other curious nondescript articles, some of which, in the superstitious opinions of that period, seemed to be designed for magical purposes. The library of this singular character was of the same miscellaneous description with his other effects. Curious manuscripts of classical antiquity lay mingled with the voluminous labours of Christian divines, and of those painstaking sages who professed the chemical science, and proffered to guide their students into the most secret recesses of nature, by means of the Hermetical Philosophy. Some were written in the Eastern character, and others concealed their sense or nonsense under the veil of hieroglyphics and cabalistic characters. The whole apartment, and its furniture of every kind, formed a scene very impressive on the fancy, considering the general belief then indisputably entertained, concerning the truth of the occult sciences; and that effect was increased by the manners and appearance of the individual himself, who, seated in a huge

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chair, was employed in curiously examining a specimen, just issued from the Frankfort press, of the newly invented art of printing.*

Galeotti Martivalle was a tall, bulky, yet stately man, considerably past his prime, and whose youthful habits of exercise, though still occasionally resumed, had not been able to contend with his natural tendency to corpulence, increased by sedentary study, and indulgence in the pleasures of the table. His features, though rather overgrown, were dignified and noble, and a Santon might have envied the dark and downward sweep of his long-descending beard. His dress was a chamber-robe of the richest Genoa velvet, with ample sleeves, clasped with frogs of gold, and lined with sables. It was fastened round his middle by a broad belt of virgin parchment, round which were represented, in crimson characters, the signs of the Zodiac. He rose and bowed to the King, yet with the air of one to whom such exalted society was familiar, and who was not at all likely, even in the royal presence, to compromise the dignity then especially affected by the pursuers of science.

"You are engaged, father," said the King, "and, as I think, with this new-fashioned art of multiplying manuscripts, by the intervention of machinery. Can things of such mechanical and terrestrial import interest the thoughts of one, before whom Heaven has unrolled her own celestial volumes?"

"My brother," replied Martivalle,—"for so the tenant of this cell must term even the King of France, when he deigns to visit him as a disciple,—believe me that, in considering the consequences of this invention, I read with as certain augury, as by any combination of the heavenly bodies, the most awful and portentous changes. When I reflect with what slow and limited supplies the stream of science hath hitherto descended to us; how difficult to be obtained by those most ardent in its search; how certain to be neglected by all who regard their ease; how liable to be diverted, or altogether dried up, by the invasions of barbarism; can I look forward, without wonder and astonishment, to the lot of a succeeding generation, on whom knowledge will descend like the first and second rain, uninterrupted, unabated, unbounded; fertilising some grounds,

* [The invention of printing was really first practised at Mayence, on the Rhine. While the first book issued from that press bears the date 1457, the first from Frankfort is dated 1507.]

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and overflowing others; changing the whole form of social life; establishing and overthrowing religions; erecting and destroying kingdoms"——

"Hold, Galeotti," said Louis,—"shall these changes come in our time?"

"No, my royal brother," replied Martivalle; "this invention may be likened to a young tree, which is now newly planted, but shall, in succeeding generations, bear fruit as fatal, yet as precious, as that of the Garden of Eden; the knowledge, namely, of good and evil."

Louis answered, after a moment's pause, "Let futurity look to what concerns them—we are men of this age, and to this age we will confine our care. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.—Tell me, hast thou proceeded farther in the horoscope which I sent to thee, and of which you made me some report? I have brought the party hither, that you may use palmistry, or chiromancy, if such is your pleasure. The matter is pressing."

The bulky sage arose from his seat, and approaching the young soldier, fixed on him his keen large dark eyes, as if he were in the act of internally spelling and dissecting every lineament and feature.—Blushing and borne down by this close examination on the part of one whose expression was so reverend at once and commanding, Quentin bent his eyes on the ground, and did not again raise them, till in the act of obeying the sonorous command of the Astrologer, "Look up, and be not afraid, but hold forth thy hand."

When Martivalle had inspected his palm, according to the form of the mystic arts which he practised, he led the King some steps aside.—"My royal brother," he said, "the physiognomy of this youth, together with the lines impressed on his hand, confirm, in a wonderful degree, the report which I founded on his horoscope, as well as that judgment which your own proficiency in our sublime arts induced you at once to form of him. All promises that this youth will be brave and fortunate."

"And faithful?" said the King; "for valour and fortune square not always with fidelity."

"And faithful also," said the Astrologer; "for there is manly firmness in look and eye, and his *linea vitæ* is deeply marked and clear, which indicates a true and upright adherence to those who do benefit or lodge trust in him. But yet"——

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"But what?" said the King; "Father Galeotti, wherefore do you now pause?"

"The ears of Kings," said the Sage, "are like the palates of those dainty patients, which are unable to endure the bitterness of the drugs necessary for their recovery."

"My ears and my palate have no such niceness," said Louis; "let me hear what is useful counsel, and swallow what is wholesome medicine. I quarrel not with the rudeness of the one, or the harsh taste of the other. I have not been cockered in wantonness or indulgence; my youth was one of exile and suffering. My ears are used to harsh counsel, and take no offence at it."

"Then plainly, Sire," replied Galeotti, "if you have aught in your proposed commission, which—which, in short, may startle a scrupulous conscience—intrust it not to this youth—at least, not till a few years' exercise in your service has made him as unscrupulous as others."

"And is this what you hesitated to speak, my good Galeotti? and didst thou think thy speaking it would offend me?" said the King. "Alack, I know that thou art well sensible, that the path of royal policy cannot be always squared (as that of private life ought invariably to be) by the abstract maxims of religion and of morality. Wherefore do we, the Princes of the earth, found churches and monasteries, make pilgrimages, undergo penances, and perform devotions, with which others may dispense, unless it be because the benefit of the public, and the welfare of our kingdoms, force us upon measures which grieve our consciences as Christians? But Heaven has mercy—the Church, an unbounded stock of merits, and the intercession of our Lady of Embrun, and the blessed saints, is urgent, everlasting, and omnipotent."—He laid his hat on the table, and devoutly kneeling before the images stuck in his hat-band, repeated in an earnest tone, "*Sancte Huberte, Sancte Juliane, Sancte Martine, Sancte Rosalia, Sancti quotquot adestis, orate pro me peccatore!*" He then smote his breast, arose, re-assumed his hat, and continued;—"Be assured, good father, that whatever there may be in our commission, of the nature at which you have hinted, the execution shall not be intrusted to this youth, nor shall he be privy to such part of our purpose."

"In this," said the Astrologer, "you, my royal brother, will walk wisely.—Something may be apprehended likewise from

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the rashness of this your young commissioner; a failing inherent in those of sanguine complexion. But I hold that, by the rules of art, this chance is not to be weighed against the other properties discovered from his horoscope and otherwise."

"Will this next midnight be a propitious hour in which to commence a perilous journey?" said the King.—"See, here is your ephemerides—you see the position of the moon in regard to Saturn, and the ascendence of Jupiter—That should argue, methinks, in submission to your better art, success to him who sends forth the expedition at such an hour."

"To him who *sends forth* the expedition," said the Astrologer, after a pause, "this conjunction doth indeed promise success; but, methinks, that Saturn being combust, threatens danger and infortune to the party *sent;* whence I infer that the errand may be perilous, or even fatal, to those who are to journey. Violence and captivity, methinks, are intimated in that adverse conjunction."

"Violence and captivity to those who are sent," answered the King, "but success to the wishes of the sender—Runs it not thus, my learned father?"

"Even so," replied the Astrologer.

The King paused, without giving any farther indication how far this presaging speech (probably hazarded by the Astrologer from his conjecture that the commission related to some dangerous purpose) squared with his real object, which, as the reader is aware, was to betray the Countess Isabelle of Croye into the hands of William de la Marck, a nobleman indeed of high birth, but degraded by his crimes into a leader of banditti, distinguished for his turbulent disposition and ferocious bravery.

The King then pulled forth a paper from his pocket, and, ere he gave it to Martivalle, said, in a tone which resembled that of an apology—"Learned Galeotti, be not surprised, that, possessing in you an oracular treasure, superior to that lodged in the breast of any now alive, not excepting the great Nostradamus himself, I am desirous frequently to avail myself of your skill in those doubts and difficulties which beset every Prince who hath to contend with rebellion within his land, and with external enemies, both powerful and inveterate."

"When I was honoured with your request, Sire," said the philosopher, "and abandoned the Court of Buda for that of

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Plessis, it was with the resolution to place at the command of my royal patron whatever my art had, that might be of service to him."

"Enough, good Martivalle—I pray thee attend to the import of this question."—He proceeded to read from the paper in his hand:—"A person having on hand a weighty controversy, which is like to draw to debate either by law or by force of arms, is desirous, for the present, to seek accommodation by a personal interview with his antagonist. He desires to know what day will be propitious for the execution of such a purpose; also what is likely to be the success of such a negotiation, and whether his adversary will be moved to answer the confidence thus reposed in him with gratitude and kindness, or may rather be likely to abuse the opportunity and advantage which such meeting may afford him?"

"It is an important question," said Martivalle, when the King had done reading, "and requires that I should set a planetary figure, and give it instant and deep consideration."

"Let it be so, my good father in the sciences, and thou shalt know what it is to oblige a King of France. We are determined, if the constellations forbid not,—and our own humble art leads us to think that they approve our purpose,—to hazard something, even in our own person, to stop these anti-Christian wars."

"May the saints forward your Majesty's pious intent," said the Astrologer, "and guard your sacred person!"

"Thanks, learned father.—Here is something the while, to enlarge your curious library."

He placed under one of the volumes a small purse of gold; for, economical even in his superstitions, Louis conceived the Astrologer sufficiently bound to his service by the pensions he had assigned him, and thought himself entitled to the use of his skill at a moderate rate, even upon great exigencies.

Louis, having thus, in legal phrase, added a refreshing fee to his general retainer, turned from him to address Durward.—"Follow me," he said, "my bonny Scot, as one chosen by Destiny and a Monarch to accomplish a bold adventure. All must be got ready, that thou mayest put foot in stirrup the very instant the bell of Saint Martin's tolls twelve. One minute sooner, one minute later, were to forfeit the favourable aspect of the constellations which smile on your adventure."

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Thus saying, the King left the apartment, followed by his young guardsman; and no sooner were they gone, than the Astrologer gave way to very different feelings from those which seemed to animate him during the royal presence.

"The niggardly slave!" he said, weighing the purse in his hand,—for, being a man of unbounded expense, he had almost constant occasion for money,—"The base sordid scullion!—A coxswain's wife would give more to know that her husband had crossed the narrow seas in safety. *He* acquire any tincture of humane letters!—yes, when prowling foxes and yelling wolves become musicians. *He* read the glorious blazoning of the firmament!—ay, when sordid moles shall become lynxes.—*Post tot promissa*—after so many promises made, to entice me from the Court of the magnificent Matthias, where Hun and Turk, Christian and Infidel, the Czar of Muscovia and the Khan of Tartary themselves, contended to load me with gifts,—doth he think I am to abide in this old Castle, like a bullfinch in a cage, fain to sing as oft as he chooses to whistle, and call for seed and water?—Not so—*aut inveniam viam, aut faciam*—I will discover or contrive a remedy. The Cardinal Balue is politic and liberal—this query shall to him, and it shall be his Eminence's own fault if the stars speak not as he would have them."

He again took the despised guerdon, and weighed it in his hand. "It may be," he said, "there is some jewel, or pearl of price, concealed in this paltry case—I have heard he can be liberal even to lavishness, when it suits his caprice or interest."

He emptied the purse, which contained neither more nor less than ten gold pieces. The indignation of the Astrologer was extreme. "Thinks he that for such paltry rate of hire I will practise that celestial science which I have studied with the Armenian Abbot of Istrahoff, who had not seen the sun for forty years,—with the Greek Dubravius, who is said to have raised the dead,—and have even visited the Scheik Ebn Hali in his cave in the deserts of Thebais?—No, by Heaven!—he that contemns art shall perish through his own ignorance. Ten pieces!—a pittance which I am half ashamed to offer to Toinette, to buy her new breast-laces."

So saying, the indignant Sage nevertheless plunged the contemned pieces of gold into a large pouch which he wore at his

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girdle, which Toinette, and other abettors of lavish expense, generally contrived to empty fully faster than the philosopher, with all his art, could find the means of filling.*

* Note H. Galeotti.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

THE JOURNEY.

I see thee yet, fair France—thou favour'd land
Of art and nature—thou art still before me;
Thy sons, to whom their labour is a sport,
So well the grateful soil returns its tribute;
Thy sunburnt daughters, with their laughing eyes
And glossy raven-locks. But, favour'd France,
Thou hast had many a tale of woe to tell
In ancient times as now.

ANONYMOUS.

AVOIDING all conversation with any one (for such was his charge), Quentin Durward proceeded hastily to array himself in a strong but plain cuirass, with thigh and arm pieces, and placed on his head a good steel cap without any visor. To these was added a handsome cassock of shamois leather, finely dressed and laced down the seams with some embroidery, such as might become a superior officer in a noble household.

These were brought to his apartment by Oliver, who, with his quiet, insinuating smile and manner, acquainted him that his uncle had been summoned to mount guard, purposely that he might make no inquiries concerning these mysterious movements.

"Your excuse will be made to your kinsman," said Oliver, smiling again; "and, my dearest son, when you return safe from the execution of this pleasing trust, I doubt not you will be found worthy of such promotion as will dispense with your accounting for your motions to any one, while it will place you at the head of those who must render an account of theirs to you."

So spoke Oliver le Diable, calculating, probably, in his own mind, the great chance there was that the poor youth whose

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hand he squeezed affectionately as he spoke, must necessarily encounter death or captivity in the commission intrusted to his charge. He added to his fair words a small purse of gold, to defray necessary expenses on the road, as a gratuity on the King's part.

At a few minutes before twelve at midnight, Quentin, according to his directions, proceeded to the second courtyard, and paused under the Dauphin's Tower, which, as the reader knows, was assigned for the temporary residence of the Countesses of Croye. He found at this place of rendezvous the men and horses appointed to compose the retinue, leading two sumpter mules already loaded with baggage, and holding three palfreys for the two Countesses and a faithful waiting-woman, with a stately war-horse for himself, whose steel-plated saddle glanced in the pale moonlight. Not a word of recognition was spoken on either side. The men sat still in their saddles, as if they were motionless; and by the same imperfect light Quentin saw with pleasure that they were all armed, and held long lances in their hands. They were only three in number; but one of them whispered to Quentin, in a strong Gascon accent, that their guide was to join them beyond Tours.

Meantime, lights glanced to and fro at the lattices of the tower, as if there was bustle and preparation among its inhabitants. At length, a small door, which led from the bottom of the tower to the court, was unclosed, and three females came forth attended by a man wrapped in a cloak. They mounted in silence the palfreys which stood prepared for them, while their attendant on foot led the way, and gave the passwords and signals to the watchful guards, whose posts they passed in succession. Thus they at length reached the exterior of these formidable barriers. Here the man on foot, who had hitherto acted as their guide, paused, and spoke low and earnestly to the two foremost females.

"May heaven bless you, Sire," said a voice which thrilled upon Quentin Durward's ear, "and forgive you, even if your purposes be more interested than your words express! To be placed in safety under the protection of the good Bishop of Liege, is the utmost extent of my desire."

The person whom she thus addressed, muttered an inaudible answer, and retreated back through the barrier gate, while

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Quentin thought that, by the moon-glimpse, he recognised in him the King himself, whose anxiety for the departure of his guests had probably induced him to give his presence, in case scruples should arise on their part, or difficulties on that of the guards of the Castle.

When the riders were beyond the Castle, it was necessary for some time to ride with great precaution, in order to avoid the pitfalls, snares, and similar contrivances, which were placed for the annoyance of strangers. The Gascon was, however, completely possessed of the clew to this labyrinth, and in a quarter of an hour's riding they found themselves beyond the limits of Plessis le Parc, and not far distant from the city of Tours.

The moon, which had now extricated herself from the clouds through which she was formerly wading, shed a full sea of glorious light upon a landscape equally glorious. They saw the princely Loire rolling his majestic tide through the richest plain in France, and sweeping along between banks ornamented with towers and terraces, and with olives and vineyards. They saw the walls of the city of Tours the ancient capital of Touraine, raising their portal towers and embattlements white in the moonlight, while from within their circle rose the immense Gothic mass, which the devotion of the sainted Bishop Perpetuus erected as early as the fifth century, and which the zeal of Charlemagne and his successors had enlarged with such architectural splendour as rendered it the most magnificent church in France. The towers of the church of Saint Gatien were also visible, and the gloomy strength of the Castle, which was said to have been, in ancient times, the residence of the Emperor Valentinian.

Even the circumstances in which he was placed, though of a nature so engrossing, did not prevent the wonder and delight with which the young Scottishman, accustomed to the waste though impressive landscape of his own mountains, and the poverty even of his country's most stately scenery, looked on a scene, which art and nature seemed to have vied in adorning with their richest splendour. But he was recalled to the business of the moment by the voice of the elder lady (pitched at least an octave higher than those soft tones which bid adieu to King Louis), demanding to speak with the leader of the band. Spurring his horse forward, Quentin respectfully presented him-

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self to the ladies in that capacity, and thus underwent the interrogatories of the Lady Hameline.

"What was his name, and what his degree?"

He told both.

"Was he perfectly acquainted with the road?"

"He could not," he replied, "pretend to much knowledge of the route, but he was furnished with full instructions, and he was, at their first resting-place, to be provided with a guide, in all respects competent to the task of directing their farther journey; meanwhile, a horseman, who had just joined them, and made the number of their guard four, was to be their guide for the first stage."

"And wherefore were you selected for such a duty, young gentleman?" said the lady.—"I am told you are the same youth who was lately upon guard in the gallery in which we met the Princess of France. You seem young and inexperienced for such a charge—a stranger, too, in France, and speaking the language as a foreigner."

"I am bound to obey the commands of the King, madam, but am not qualified to reason on them," answered the young soldier.

"Are you of noble birth?" demanded the same querist.

"I may safely affirm so, madam," replied Quentin.

"And are your not," said the younger lady, addressing him in her turn, but with a timorous accent, "the same whom I saw when I was called to wait upon the King at yonder inn?"

Lowering his voice, perhaps from similar feelings of timidity, Quentin answered in the affirmative.

"Then, methinks, my cousin," said the Lady Isabelle, addressing the Lady Hameline, "we must be safe under this young gentleman's safeguard; he looks not, at least, like one to whom the execution of a plan of treacherous cruelty upon two helpless women could be with safety intrusted.

"On my honour, madam," said Durward, "by the fame of my house, by the bones of my ancestry, I could not, for France and Scotland laid into one, be guilty of treachery or cruelty towards you!"

"You speak well, young man," said the Lady Hameline; "but we are accustomed to hear fair speeches from the King of France and his agents. It was by these that we were induced,

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when the protection of the Bishop of Liege might have been attained with less risk than now, or when we might have thrown ourselves on that of Winceslaus of Germany, or of Edward of England, to seek refuge in France. And in what did the promises of the King result? In an obscure and shameful concealing of us, under plebeian names, as a sort of prohibited wares, in yonder paltry hostelry, when we,—who, as thou knowest, Marthon" (addressing her domestic), "never put on our headtire save under a canopy, and upon a dais of three degrees,—were compelled to attire ourselves, standing on the simple floor, as if we had been two milkmaids."

Marthon admitted that her lady spoke a most melancholy truth.

"I would that had been the sorest evil, dear kinswoman," said the Lady Isabelle; "I could gladly have dispensed with state."

"But not with society," said the elder Countess; "that, my sweet cousin, was impossible."

"I would have dispensed with all, my dearest kinswoman," answered Isabelle, in a voice which penetrated to the very heart of her young conductor and guard, "with all, for a safe and honourable retirement. I wish not—God knows, I never wished—to occasion war betwixt France and my native Burgundy, or that lives should be lost for such as I am. I only implored permission to retire to the Convent of Marmoutier, or to any other holy sanctuary."

"You spoke then like a fool, my cousin," answered the elder lady, "and not like a daughter of my noble brother. It is well there is still one alive, who hath some of the spirit of the noble house of Croye. How should a high-born lady be known from a sunburnt milkmaid, save that spears are broken for the one, and only hazel-poles shattered for the other? I tell you, maiden, that while I was in the very earliest bloom, scarcely older than yourself, the famous Passage of Arms at Haflinghem was held in my honour; the challengers were four, the assailants so many as twelve. It lasted three days; and cost the lives of two adventurous knights, the fracture of one back-bone, one collar-bone, three legs, and two arms, besides flesh-wounds and bruises beyond the heralds' counting; and thus have the ladies of our house ever been honoured. Ah! had you but half the heart of your noble ancestry, you would find means at some

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Court, where ladies' love and fame in arms are still prized, to maintain a tournament, at which your hand should be the prize, as was that of your great-grandmother of blessed memory, at the spear-running of Strasbourg; and thus should you gain the best lance in Europe, to maintain the rights of the House of Croye, both against the oppression of Burgundy and the policy of France."

"But, fair kinswoman," answered the younger Countess, "I have been told by my old nurse, that although the Rhinegrave was the best lance at the great tournament at Strasbourg, and so won the hand of my respected ancestor, yet the match was no happy one, as he used often to scold, and sometimes even to beat, my great-grandmother of blessed memory."

"And wherefore not?" said the elder Countess, in her romantic enthusiasm for the profession of chivalry; "why should those victorious arms, accustomed to deal blows when abroad, be bound to restrain their energies at home? A thousand times rather would I be beaten twice a-day by a husband whose arm was as much feared by others as by me, than be the wife of a coward, who dared neither to lift hand to his wife, nor to any one else!"

"I should wish you joy of such an active mate, fair aunt," replied Isabelle, "without envying you; for if broken bones be lovely in tourneys, there is nothing less amiable in ladies' bower."

"Nay, but the beating is no necessary consequence of wedding with a knight of fame in arms," said the Lady Hameline; "though it is true that our ancestor of blessed memory, the Rhinegrave Gottfried, was something rough-tempered, and addicted to the use of Rheinwein.—The very perfect knight is a lamb among ladies, and a lion among lances. There was Thibault of Montigni—God be with him!—he was the kindest soul alive, and not only was he never so discourteous as to lift hand against his lady, but, by our good dame, he who beat all enemies without doors, found a fair foe who could belabour him within.—Well, 'twas his own fault—he was one of the challengers at the Passage of Haflinghem, and so well bestirred himself, that, if it had pleased Heaven, and your grandfather, there might have been a lady of Montigni, who had used his gentle nature more gently."

The Countess Isabelle, who had some reason to dread this

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Passage of Haflinghem, it being a topic upon which her aunt was at all times very diffuse, suffered the conversation to drop; and Quentin, with the natural politeness of one who had been gently nurtured, dreading lest his presence might be a restraint on their conversation, rode forward to join the guide, as if to ask him some questions concerning their route.

Meanwhile, the ladies continued their journey in silence, or in such conversation as is not worth narrating, until day began to break; and as they had then been on horseback for several hours, Quentin, anxious lest they should be fatigued, became impatient to know their distance from the nearest resting-place.

"I will show it you," answered the guide, "in half-an-hour."

"And then you leave us to other guidance?" continued Quentin.

"Even so, Seignior Archer," replied the man; "my journeys are always short and straight.—When you and others, Seignior Archer, go by the bow, I always go by the cord."

The moon had by this time long been down, and the lights of dawn were beginning to spread bright and strong in the east, and to gleam on the bosom of a small lake, on the verge of which they had been riding for a short space of time. This lake lay in the midst of a wide plain, scattered over with single trees, groves, and thickets; but which might be yet termed open, so that objects began to be discerned with sufficient accuracy. Quentin cast his eye on the person whom he rode beside, and under the shadow of a slouched overspreading hat, which resembled the sombrero of a Spanish peasant, he recognised the facetious features of the same Petit-André, whose fingers, not long since, had, in concert with those of his lugubrious brother, Trois-Eschelles, been so unpleasantly active about his throat.—Impelled by aversion, not altogether unmixed with fear (for in his own country the executioner is regarded with almost superstitious horror), which his late narrow escape had not diminished, Durward instinctively moved his horse's head to the right, and pressing him at the same time with the spur, made a demi-volte, which separated him eight feet from his hateful companion.

"Ho, ho, ho, ho!" exclaimed Petit-André; "by our Lady of the Grève, our young soldier remembers us of old.—What! comrade, you bear no malice, I trust?—every one wins his bread in this country. No man need be ashamed of having

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come through my hands, for I will do my work with any that ever tied a living weight to a dead tree.—And God hath given me grace to be such a merry fellow withal—Ha! ha! ha!—I could tell you such jests I have cracked between the foot of the ladder and the top of the gallows, that, by my halidome, I have been obliged to do my job rather hastily, for fear the fellows should die with laughing, and so shame my mystery!"

As he thus spoke, he edged his horse sideways, to regain the interval which the Scot had left between them, saying, at the same time, "Come, Seignior Archer, let there be no unkindness betwixt us!—For my part, I always do my duty without malice, and with a light heart, and I never love a man better than when I have put my scant-of-wind collar about his neck, to dub him Knight of the Order of Saint Patibularius, as the Provost's Chaplain, the worthy Father Vaconeldiablo, is wont to call the Patron Saint of the Provostry."

"Keep back, thou wretched object!" exclaimed Quentin, as the finisher of the law again sought to approach him closer, "or I shall be tempted to teach you the distance that should be betwixt men of honour and such an outcast."

"La you there, how hot you are!" said the fellow; "had you said men of *honesty*, there had been some savour of truth in it; but for men of *honour*, good lack, I have to deal with them every day, as nearly and closely as I was about to do business with you.—But peace be with you, and keep your company to yourself. I would have bestowed a flagon of Auvernat upon you to wash away every unkindness—but 'tis like you scorn my courtesy.—Well. Be as churlish as you list—I never quarrel with my customers—my jerry-come-tumbles, my merry dancers, my little playfellows, as Jacques Butcher says to his lambs—those in fine, who, like your seigniorship, have H. E. M. P. written on their foreheads—No, no, let them use me as they list, they shall have my good service at last—and yourself shall see, when you next come under Petit-André's hands, that he knows how to forgive an injury."

So saying, and summing up the whole with a provoking wink, and such an interjectional *tchick* as men quicken a dull horse with, Petit-André drew off to the other side of the path, and left the youth to digest the taunts he had treated him with, as his proud Scottish stomach best might. A strong desire had Quentin to have belaboured him while the staff of

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his lance could hold together; but he put a restraint on his passion, recollecting that a brawl with such a character could be creditable at no time or place, and that a quarrel of any kind, on the present occasion, would be a breach of duty, and might involve the most perilous consequences. He therefore swallowed his wrath at the ill-timed and professional jokes of Mons. Petit-André, and contented himself with devoutly hoping that they had not reached the ears of his fair charge, on which they could not be supposed to make an impression in favour of himself, as one obnoxious to such sarcasms. But he was speedily roused from such thoughts by the cry of both ladies at once, "Look back—look back!—For the love of Heaven look to yourself, and us—we are pursued!"

Quentin hastily looked back, and saw that two armed men were in fact following them, and riding at such a pace as must soon bring them up with their party. "It can," he said, "be only some of the Provostry making their rounds in the forest.—Do thou look," he said to Petit-André, "and see what they may be."

Petit-André obeyed; and rolling himself jocosely in the saddle after he had made his observations, replied, "These, fair sir, are neither your comrades nor mine—neither Archers nor Marshalmen—for I think they wear helmets, with visors lowered, and gorgets of the same.—A plague upon these gorgets, of all other pieces of armour!—I have fumbled with them an hour before I could undo the rivets."

"Do you, gracious ladies," said Durward, without attending to Petit-André, "ride forward—not so fast as to raise an opinion of your being in flight, and yet fast enough to avail yourself of the impediment which I shall presently place between you and these men who follow us."

The Countess Isabelle looked to their guide, and then whispered to her aunt, who spoke to Quentin thus—"We have confidence in your care, fair Archer, and will rather abide the risk of whatever may chance in your company, than we will go onward with that man, whose mien is, we think, of no good augury."

"Be it as you will, ladies," said the youth—"There are but two who come after us; and though they be knights, as their arms seem to show, they shall, if they have any evil purpose, learn how a Scottish gentleman can do his devoir in the

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presence and for the defence of such as you.—Which of you there," he continued, addressing the guards whom he commanded, "is willing to be my comrade, and to break a lance with these gallants?"

Two of the men obviously faltered in resolution; but the third, Bertrand Guyot, swore, "that *cap de diou*, were they Knights of King Arthur's Round Table, he would try their mettle, for the honour of Gascony."

While he spoke, the two knights—for they seemed of no less rank—came up with the rear of the party, in which Quentin, with his sturdy adherent, had by this time stationed himself. They were fully accoutred in excellent armour of polished steel, without any device by which they could be distinguished.

One of them, as they approached, called out to Quentin, "Sir Squire, give place—we come to relieve you of a charge which is above your rank and condition. You will do well to leave these ladies in our care, who are fitter to wait upon them, especially as we know that in yours they are little better than captives."

"In return to your demand, sir," replied Durward, "know, in the first place, that I am discharging the duty imposed upon me by my present Sovereign; and next, that, however unworthy I may be, the ladies desire to abide under my protection."

"Out, sirrah!" exclaimed one of the champions; "will you, a wandering beggar, put yourself on terms of resistance against belted knights?"

"They are indeed terms of resistance," said Quentin, "since they oppose your insolent and unlawful aggression; and if there be difference of rank between us, which as yet I know not, your discourtesy has done it away. Draw your sword, or, if you will use the lance, take ground for your career."

While the knights turned their horses, and rode back to the distance of about a hundred and fifty yards, Quentin, looking to the ladies, bent low on his saddle-bow, as if desiring their favourable regard, and as they streamed towards him their kerchiefs, in token of encouragement, the two assailants had gained the distance necessary for their charge.

Calling to the Gascon to bear himself like a man, Durward put his steed into motion; and the four horsemen met in full career in the midst of the ground which at first separated them. The shock was fatal to the poor Gascon; for his adversary, aiming

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at his face, which was undefended by a visor, ran him through the eye into the brain, so that he fell dead from his horse.

On the other hand, Quentin, though labouring under the same disadvantage, swayed himself in the saddle so dexterously, that the hostile lance, slightly scratching his cheek, passed over his right shoulder; while his own spear, striking his antagonist fair upon the breast, hurled him to the ground. Quentin jumped off, to unhelm his fallen opponent; but the other knight (who had never yet spoken), seeing the fortune of his companion, dismounted still more speedily than Durward, and bestriding his friend, who lay senseless, exclaimed, "In the name of God and Saint Martin, mount, good fellow, and get thee gone with thy woman's ware!—Ventre Saint Gris, they have caused mischief enough this morning."

"By your leave, Sir Knight," said Quentin, who could not brook the menacing tone in which this advice was given, "I will first see whom I have had to do with, and learn who is to answer for the death of my comrade."

"That shalt thou never live to know or to tell," answered the knight. "Get thee back in peace, good fellow. If we were fools for interrupting your passage, we have had the worst, for thou hast done more evil than the lives of thou and thy whole band could repay.—Nay, if thou *wilt* have it" (for Quentin now drew his sword, and advanced on him), "take it with a vengeance!"

So saying, he dealt the Scot such a blow on the helmet, as, till that moment (though bred where good blows were plenty), he had only read of in romance. It descended like a thunderbolt, beating down the guard which the young soldier had raised to protect his head, and reaching his helmet of proof, cut it through so far as to touch his hair, but without farther injury; while Durward, dizzy, stunned, and beat down on one knee, was for an instant at the mercy of the knight, had it pleased him to second his blow. But compassion for Quentin's youth, or admiration of his courage, or a generous love of fair play, made him withhold from taking such advantage; while Durward, collecting himself, sprung up and attacked his antagonist with the energy of one determined to conquer or die, and at the same time with the presence of mind necessary for fighting the quarrel out to the best advantage. Resolved not again to expose himself to such dreadful blows as he had just

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sustained, he employed the advantage of superior agility, increased by the comparative lightness of his armour, to harass his antagonist, by traversing on all sides, with a suddenness of motion and rapidity of attack, against which the knight, in his heavy panoply, found it difficult to defend himself without much fatigue.

It was in vain that this generous antagonist called aloud to Quentin, "that there now remained no cause of fight betwixt them, and that he was loath to be constrained to do him injury." Listening only to the suggestions of a passionate wish to redeem the shame of his temporary defeat, Durward continued to assail him with the rapidity of lightning—now menacing him with the edge, now with the point of his sword—and ever keeping such an eye on the motions of his opponent, of whose superior strength he had had terrible proof, that he was ready to spring backward, or aside, from under the blows of his tremendous weapon.

"Now the devil be with thee for an obstinate and presumptuous fool," muttered the knight, "that cannot be quiet till thou art knocked on the head!" So saying, he changed his mode of fighting, collected himself as if to stand on the defensive, and seemed contented with parrying, instead of returning, the blows which Quentin unceasingly aimed at him, with the internal resolution, that the instant when either loss of breath, or any false or careless pass of the young soldier, should give an opening, he would put an end to the fight by a single blow. It is likely he might have succeeded in this artful policy, but Fate had ordered it otherwise.

The duel was still at the hottest, when a large party of horse rode up, crying, "Hold in the King's name!" Both champions stepped back—and Quentin saw, with surprise, that his Captain, Lord Crawford, was at the head of the party who had thus interrupted their combat. There was also Tristan l'Hermite, with two or three of his followers; making, in all, perhaps twenty horse.

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CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

THE GUIDE.

He was a son of Egypt, as he told me,
And one descended from those dread magicians,
Who waged rash war, when Israel dwelt in Goshen,
With Israel and her Prophet—matching rod
With his the sons of Levi's—and encountering
Jehovah's miracles with incantations,
Till upon Egypt came the avenging Angel,
And those proud sages wept for their first-born,
As wept the unletter'd peasant.

ANONYMOUS.

THE arrival of Lord Crawford and his guard put an immediate end to the engagement which we endeavoured to describe in the last chapter; and the Knight, throwing off his helmet, hastily gave the old Lord his sword, saying, "Crawford, I render myself—But hither—and lend me your ear—a word, for God's sake—save the Duke of Orleans!"

"How!—what?—the Duke of Orleans!" exclaimed the Scottish commander,—"How came this, in the name of the foul fiend? It will ruin the callant with the King, for ever and a day."

"Ask no questions," said Dunois—for it was no other than he—"it was all my fault.—See, he stirs. I came forth but to have a snatch at yonder damsel, and make myself a landed and a married man—and see what is come on't. Keep back your canaille—let no man look upon him." So saying, he opened the visor of Orleans, and threw water on his face, which was afforded by the neighbouring lake.

Quentin Durward, meanwhile, stood like one planet-struck; so fast did new adventures pour in upon him. He had now, as the pale features of his first antagonist assured him, borne to the earth the first Prince of the blood in France, and had measured swords with her best champion, the celebrated Dunois; both of them achievements honourable in themselves; but whether they might be called good service to the King, or so esteemed by him, was a very different question.

The Duke had now recovered his breath, and was able to sit

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up and give attention to what passed betwixt Dunois and Crawford, while the former pleaded eagerly, that there was no occasion to mention in the matter the name of the most noble Orleans, while he was ready to take the whole blame on his own shoulders; and to avouch that the Duke had only come hither in friendship to him.

Lord Crawford continued listening with his eyes fixed on the ground, and from time to time he sighed and shook his head. At length he said, looking up, "Thou knowest, Dunois, that, for thy father's sake, as well as thine own, I would full fain do thee a service."

"It is not for myself I demand anything," answered Dunois. "Thou hast my sword, and I am your prisoner—what needs more?—But it is for this noble Prince, the only hope of France, if God should call the Dauphin. He only came hither to do me a favour—in an effort to make my fortune—in a matter which the King had partly encouraged."

"Dunois," replied Crawford, "if another had told me thou hadst brought the noble Prince into this jeopardy to serve any purpose of thine own, I had told him it was false. And now, that thou dost pretend so thyself, I can hardly believe it is for the sake of speaking the truth."

"Noble Crawford," said Orleans, who had now entirely recovered from his swoon, "you are too like in character to your friend Dunois, not to do him justice. It was indeed I that dragged him hither, most unwillingly, upon an enterprise of harebrained passion, suddenly and rashly undertaken.—Look on me all who will," he added, rising up and turning to the soldiery—"I am Louis of Orleans, willing to pay the penalty of my own folly. I trust the King will limit his displeasure to me, as is but just.—Meanwhile, as a Child of France must not give up his sword to any one—not even to you, brave Crawford—fare-thee-well, good steel."

So saying, he drew his sword from its scabbard, and flung it into the lake. It went through the air like a stream of lightning, and sunk in the flashing waters, which speedily closed over it. All remained standing in irresolution and astonishment, so high was the rank, and so much esteemed was the character of the culprit; while, at the same time, all were conscious that the consequences of his rash enterprise, considering the views which the King had upon him, were likely to end in his utter ruin.

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Dunois was the first who spoke, and it was in the chiding tone of an offended and distrusted friend:—"So! your Highness hath judged it fit to cast away your best sword, in the same morning when it was your pleasure to fling away the King's favour, and to slight the friendship of Dunois?"

"My dearest kinsman," said the Duke, "when or how was it in my purpose to slight your friendship by telling the truth, when it was due to your safety and my honour?"

"What had you to do with my safety, my most princely cousin, I would pray to know?" answered Dunois gruffly;—"What, in God's name, was it to you, if I had a mind to be hanged, or strangled, or flung into the Loire, or poniarded, or broke on the wheel, or hung up alive in an iron cage, or buried alive in a castle fosse, or disposed of in any other way in which it might please King Louis to get rid of his faithful subject?—(you need not wink and frown, and point to Tristan l'Hermite—I see the scoundrel as well as you do.) But it would not have stood so hard with me—And so much for my safety. And then for your own honour—By the blush of Saint Magdalene, I think the honour would have been to have missed this morning's work, or kept it out of sight. Here has your Highness got yourself unhorsed by a wild Scottish boy."

"Tut, tut!" said Lord Crawford; "never shame his Highness for that. It is not the first time a Scottish boy hath broke a good lance—I am glad the youth hath borne him well."

"I will say nothing to the contrary," said Dunois; "yet, had your Lordship come something later than you did, there might have been a vacancy in your band of Archers."

"Ay, ay," answered Lord Crawford; "I can read your handwriting in that cleft morion.—Some one take it from the lad and give him a bonnet, which, with its steel lining, will keep his head better than that broken loom.—And let me tell your Lordship, that your own armour of proof is not without some marks of good Scottish handwriting.—But, Dunois, I must now request the Duke of Orleans and you to take horse and accompany me, as I have power and commission to convey you to a place different from that which my good-will might assign you."

"May I not speak one word, my Lord of Crawford, to yonder fair ladies?" said the Duke of Orleans.

"Not one syllable," answered Lord Crawford; "I am too

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much a friend of your Highness to permit such an act of folly." —Then, addressing Quentin, he added, "You, young man, have done your duty. Go on to obey the charge with which you are intrusted."

"Under favour, my Lord," said Tristan, with his usual brutality of manner, "the youth must find another guide. I cannot do without Petit-André, when there is so like to be business on hand for him."

"The young man," said Petit-André, now coming forward, "has only to keep the path which lies straight before him, and it will conduct him to a place where he will find the man who is to act as his guide.—I would not for a thousand ducats be absent from my Chief this day! I have hanged knights and squires many a one, and wealthy Echevins, and burgomasters to boot—even counts and marquisses have tasted of my handiwork—but, a-humph"—— He looked at the Duke, as if to intimate that he would have filled up the blank with "a Prince of the blood!"—"Ho, ho, ho! Petit-André, thou wilt be read of in Chronicle!"

"Do you permit your ruffians to hold such language in such a presence?" said Crawford, looking sternly to Tristan.

"Why do you not correct him yourself, my Lord?" said Tristan, sullenly.

"Because thy hand is the only one in this company that can beat him without being degraded by such an action."

"Then rule your own men, my Lord, and I will be answerable for mine," said the Provost-Marshal.

Lord Crawford seemed about to give a passionate reply; but, as if he had thought better of it, turned his back short upon Tristan, and, requesting the Duke of Orleans and Dunois to ride one on either hand of him, he made a signal of adieu to the ladies, and said to Quentin, "God bless thee, my child; thou hast begun thy service valiantly, though in an unhappy cause." He was about to go off—when Quentin could hear Dunois whisper to Crawford, "Do you carry us to Plessis?"

"No, my unhappy and rash friend," answered Crawford, with a sigh; "to Loches."

"To Loches!" The name of a castle, or rather prison, yet more dreaded than Plessis itself, fell like a death-toll upon the ear of the young Scotchman. He had heard it described as a place destined to the workings of those secret acts of cruelty with

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which even Louis shamed to pollute the interior of his own residence. There were in this place of terror dungeons under dungeons, some of them unknown even to the keepers themselves; living graves, to which men were consigned, with little hope of farther employment during the rest of their life, than to breathe impure air, and feed on bread and water. At this formidable castle were also those dreadful places of confinement called *cages*, in which the wretched prisoner could neither stand upright, nor stretch himself at length, an invention, it is said, of the Cardinal Balue.* It is no wonder that the name of this place of horrors, and the consciousness that he had been partly the means of despatching thither two such illustrious victims, struck so much sadness into the heart of the young Scot, that he rode for some time with his head dejected, his eyes fixed on the ground, and his heart filled with the most painful reflections.

As he was now again at the head of the little troop, and pursuing the road which had been pointed out to him, the Lady Hameline had an opportunity to say to him,—

"Methinks, fair sir, you regret the victory which your gallantry has attained in our behalf?"

There was something in the question which sounded like irony, but Quentin had tact enough to answer simply and with sincerity.

"I can regret nothing that is done in the service of such ladies as you are; but, methinks, had it consisted with your safety, I had rather have fallen by the sword of so good a soldier as Dunois, than have been the means of consigning that renowned knight and his unhappy chief, the Duke of Orleans, to yonder fearful dungeons."

"It *was*, then, the Duke of Orleans," said the elder lady, turning to her niece. "I thought so, even at the distance from which we beheld the fray.—You see, kinswoman, what we might have been, had this sly and avaricious monarch permitted us to be seen at his Court. The first Prince of the blood of France, and the valiant Dunois, whose name is known as wide as that of his heroic father—This young gentleman did his devoir bravely and well; but methinks 'tis pity that he did not succumb with honour, since his ill-advised gallantry has stood betwixt us and these princely rescuers."

* Who himself tenanted one of these dens for more than eleven years.

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The Countess Isabelle replied in a firm and almost a displeased tone; with an energy, in short, which Quentin had not yet observed her use.

"Madam," she said, "but that I know you jest, I would say your speech is ungrateful to our brave defender, to whom we owe more, perhaps, than you are aware of. Had these gentlemen succeeded so far in their rash enterprise as to have defeated our escort, is it not still evident, that on the arrival of the Royal Guard, we must have shared their captivity? For my own part, I give tears, and will soon bestow masses, on the brave man who has fallen, and, I trust" (she continued, more timidly), "that he who lives will accept my grateful thanks."

As Quentin turned his face towards her, to return the fitting acknowledgments, she saw the blood which streamed down on one side of his face, and exclaimed, in a tone of deep feeling, "Holy Virgin, he is wounded! he bleeds!—Dismount, sir, and let your wound be bound up."

In spite of all that Durward could say of the slightness of his hurt, he was compelled to dismount, and to seat himself on a bank, and unhelmet himself, while the ladies of Croye, who, according to a fashion not as yet antiquated, pretended some knowledge of leechcraft, washed the wound, stanched the blood, and bound it with the kerchief of the younger Countess, in order to exclude the air, for so their practice prescribed.

In modern times, gallants seldom or never take wounds for ladies' sake, and damsels on their side never meddle with the cure of wounds. Each has a danger the less. That which the men escape will be generally acknowledged; but the peril of dressing such a slight wound as that of Quentin's, which involved nothing formidable or dangerous, was perhaps as real in its way as the risk of encountering it.

We have already said the patient was eminently handsome; and the removal of his helmet, or more properly, of his morion, had suffered his fair locks to escape in profusion, around a countenance in which the hilarity of youth was qualified by a blush of modesty at once and pleasure. And then the feelings of the younger Countess, when compelled to hold the kerchief to the wound, while her aunt sought in their baggage for some vulnerary remedy, were mingled at once with a sense of delicacy and embarrassment; a thrill of pity for the patient, and of gratitude for his services, which exaggerated, in her eyes, his

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good mien and handsome features. In short, this incident seemed intended by Fate to complete the mysterious communication which she had, by many petty and apparently accidental circumstances, established betwixt two persons, who, though far different in rank and fortune, strongly resembled each other in youth, beauty, and the romantic tenderness of an affectionate disposition. It was no wonder, therefore, that from this moment the thought of the Countess Isabelle, already so familiar to his imagination, should become paramount in Quentin's bosom, nor that, if the maiden's feelings were of a less decided character, at least so far as known to herself, she should think of her young defender, to whom she had just rendered a service so interesting, with more emotion than of any of the whole band of high-born nobles who had for two years past besieged her with their adoration. Above all, when the thought of Campo-basso, the unworthy favourite of Duke Charles, with his hypocritical mien, his base, treacherous spirit, his wry neck, and his squint, occurred to her, his portrait was more disgustingly hideous than ever, and deeply did she resolve no tyranny should make her enter into so hateful a union.

In the meantime, whether the good Lady Hameline of Croye understood and admired masculine beauty as much as when she was fifteen years younger (for the good Countess was at least thirty-five, if the records of that noble house speak the truth), or whether she thought she had done their young protector less justice than she ought, in the first view which she had taken of his services, it is certain that he began to find favour in her eyes.

"My niece," she said, "has bestowed on you a kerchief for the binding of your wound; I will give you one to grace your gallantry, and to encourage you in your farther progress in chivalry."

So saying, she gave him a richly embroidered kerchief of blue and silver, and pointing to the housing of her palfrey, and the plumes in her riding-cap, desired him to observe that the colours were the same.

The fashion of the time prescribed one absolute mode of receiving such a favour, which Quentin followed accordingly, by tying the napkin around his arm; yet his manner of acknowledgment had more of awkwardness, and less of gallantry in it than perhaps it might have had at another time, and in another

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presence; for though the wearing of a lady's favour, given in such a manner, was merely matter of general compliment, he would much rather have preferred the right of displaying on his arm that which bound the wound inflicted by the sword of Dunois.

Meantime they continued their pilgrimage, Quentin now riding abreast of the ladies, into whose society he seemed to be tacitly adopted. He did not speak much, however, being filled by the silent consciousness of happiness, which is afraid of giving too strong vent to its feelings. The Countess Isabelle spoke still less, so that the conversation was chiefly carried on by the Lady Hameline, who showed no inclination to let it drop; for, to initiate the young Archer, as she said, into the principles and practice of chivalry, she detailed to him, at full length, the Passage of Arms at Haflinghem, where she had distributed the prizes among the victors.

Not much interested, I am sorry to say, in the description of this splendid scene, or in the heraldic bearings of the different Flemish and German knights, which the lady blazoned with pitiless accuracy, Quentin began to entertain some alarm lest he should have passed the place where his guide was to join him—a most serious disaster, and from which, should it really have taken place, the very worst consequences were to be apprehended.

While he hesitated whether it would be better to send back one of his followers, to see whether this might not be the case, he heard the blast of a horn, and looking in the direction from which the sound came, beheld a horseman riding very fast towards them. The low size, and wild, shaggy, untrained state of the animal, reminded Quentin of the mountain breed of horses in his own country; but this was much more finely limbed, and, with the same appearance of hardiness, was more rapid in its movements. The head particularly, which, in the Scottish pony, is often lumpish and heavy, was small and well placed in the neck of this animal, with thin jaws, full sparkling eyes, and expanded nostrils.

The rider was even more singular in his appearance than the horse which he rode, though that was extremely unlike the horses of France. Although he managed his palfrey with great dexterity, he sat with his feet in broad stirrups, something resembling shovels, so short in the leathers, that his knees were

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well-nigh as high as the pommel of his saddle. His dress was a red turban of small size, in which he wore a sullied plume, secured by a clasp of silver; his tunic, which was shaped like those of the Estradiots (a sort of troops whom the Venetians at that time levied in the provinces, on the eastern side of their gulf), was green in colour, and tawdrily laced with gold; he wore very wide drawers or trowsers of white, though none of the cleanest, which gathered beneath the knee, and his swarthy legs were quite bare, unless for the complicated laces which bound a pair of sandals on his feet; he had no spurs, the edge of his large stirrups being so sharp as to serve to goad the horse in a very severe manner. In a crimson sash this singular horseman wore a dagger on the right side, and on the left a short crooked Moorish sword; and by a tarnished baldric over the shoulder hung the horn which announced his approach. He had a swarthy and sunburnt visage, with a thin beard, and piercing dark eyes, a well-formed mouth and nose, and other features which might have been pronounced handsome, but for the black elf-locks which hung around his face, and the air of wildness and emaciation, which rather seemed to indicate a savage than a civilised man.

"He also is a Bohemian!" said the ladies to each other; "Holy Mary, will the King again place confidence in these outcasts?"

"I will question the man, if it be your pleasure," said Quentin, "and assure myself of his fidelity as I best may."

Durward, as well as the Ladies of Croye, had recognised in this man's dress and appearance, the habit and the manners of those vagrants with whom he had been nearly confounded by the hasty proceedings of Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André, and he, too, entertained very natural apprehensions concerning the risk of reposing trust in one of that vagrant race.

"Art thou come hither to seek us?" was his first question.

The stranger nodded.

"And for what purpose?"

"To guide you to the palace of Him of Liege."

"Of the Bishop?"

The Bohemian again nodded.

"What token canst thou give me, that we should yield credence to thee?"

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"Even the old rhyme, and no other," answered the Bohemian,—

"The page slew the boar,
The peer had the gloire."

"A true token," said Quentin; "lead on, good fellow—I will speak farther with thee presently." Then falling back to the ladies, he said, "I am convinced this man is the guide we are to expect, for he hath brought me a pass-word, known, I think, but to the King and me. But I will discourse with him farther, and endeavour to ascertain how far he is to be trusted."

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

THE VAGRANT.

I am as free as Nature first made man,
Ere the base laws of servitude began,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.
THE CONQUEST OF GRENADA.

WHILE Quentin held the brief communication with the ladies, necessary to assure them that this extraordinary addition to their party was the guide whom they were to expect on the King's part, he noticed (for he was as alert in observing the motions of the stranger as the Bohemian could be on his part), that the man not only turned his head as far back as he could, to peer at them, but that, with a singular sort of agility, more resembling that of a monkey than of a man, he had screwed his whole person around on the saddle, so as to sit almost sidelong upon the horse, for the convenience, as it seemed, of watching them more attentively.

Not greatly pleased with this manœuvre, Quentin rode up to the Bohemian, and said to him, as he suddenly assumed his proper position on the horse, "Methinks, friend, you will prove but a blind guide, if you look at the tail of your horse rather than his ears."

"And if I were actually blind," answered the Bohemian, "I could not the less guide you through any county in this realm of France, or in those adjoining to it."

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"Yet you are no Frenchman born," said the Scot.

"I am not," answered the guide.

"What countryman, then, are you?" demanded Quentin.

"I am of no country," answered the guide.

"How! of no country?" repeated the Scot.

"No," answered the Bohemian, "of none. I am a Zingaro, a Bohemian, an Egyptian, or whatever the Europeans, in their different languages, may choose to call our people; but I have no country."

"Are you a Christian?" asked the Scotchman.

The Bohemian shook his head.

"Dog," said Quentin (for there was little toleration in the spirit of Catholicism in those days), "dost thou worship Mahoun?"

"No," was the indifferent and concise answer of the guide, who neither seemed offended nor surprised at the young man's violence of manner.

"Are you a Pagan, then, or what are you?"

"I have no religion,"* answered the Bohemian.

Durward started back; for though he had heard of Saracens and Idolaters, it had never entered into his idea or belief, that any body of men could exist who practised no mode of worship whatever. He recovered from his astonishment, to ask his guide where he usually dwelt.

"Wherever I chance to be for the time," replied the Bohemian. "I have no home."

"How do you guard your property?"

"Excepting the clothes which I wear, and the horse I ride on, I have no property."

"Yet you dress gaily, and ride gallantly," said Durward. "What are your means of subsistence?"

"I eat when I am hungry, drink when I am thirsty, and have no other means of subsistence than chance throws in my way," replied the vagabond.

"Under whose laws do you live?"

"I acknowledge obedience to none, but as it suits my pleasure or my necessities," said the Bohemian.

"Who is your leader, and commands you?"

"The father of our tribe—if I choose to obey him," said the guide—"otherwise I have no commander."

* Note I. Religion of the Bohemians.

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"You are then," said the wondering querist, "destitute of all that other men are combined by—you have no law, no leader, no settled means of subsistence, no house or home. You have, may Heaven compassionate you, no country—and, may Heaven enlighten and forgive you, you have no God! What is it that remains to you, deprived of government, domestic happiness, and religion?"

"I have liberty," said the Bohemian—"I crouch to no one—obey no one—respect no one.—I go where I will—live as I can—and die when my day comes."

"But you are subject to instant execution, at the pleasure of the Judge?"

"Be it so," returned the Bohemian; "I can but die so much the sooner."

"And to imprisonment also," said the Scot; "and where, then, is your boasted freedom?"

"In my thoughts," said the Bohemian, "which no chains can bind; while yours, even while your limbs are free, remain fettered by your laws and your superstitions, your dreams of local attachment, and your fantastic visions of civil policy. Such as I are free in spirit when our limbs are chained—You are imprisoned in mind, even when your limbs are most at freedom."

"Yet the freedom of your thoughts," said the Scot, "relieves not the pressure of the gyves on your limbs."

"For a brief time that may be endured," answered the vagrant; "and if within that period I cannot extricate myself, and fail of relief from my comrades, I can always die, and death is the most perfect freedom of all."

There was a deep pause of some duration, which Quentin at length broke by resuming his queries.

"Yours is a wandering race, unknown to the nations of Europe—Whence do they derive their origin?"

"I may not tell you," answered the Bohemian.

"When will they relieve this kingdom from their presence, and return to the land from whence they came?" said the Scot.

"When the day of their pilgrimage shall be accomplished," replied his vagrant guide.

"Are you not sprung from those tribes of Israel, which were carried into captivity beyond the great river Euphrates?" said

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Quentin, who had not forgotten the lore which had been taught him at Aberbrothick.

"Had we been so," answered the Bohemian, "we had followed their faith and practised their rites."

"What is thine own name?" said Durward.

"My proper name is only known to my brethren—The men beyond our tents call me Hayraddin Maugrabin, that is, Hayraddin the African Moor."

"Thou speakest too well for one who hath lived always in thy filthy horde," said the Scot.

"I have learned some of the knowledge of this land," said Hayraddin.—"When I was a little boy, our tribe was chased by the hunters after human flesh. An arrow went through my mother's head, and she died. I was entangled in the blanket on her shoulders, and was taken by the pursuers. A priest begged me from the Provost's archers, and trained me up in Frankish learning for two or three years."

"How came you to part with him?" demanded Durward.

"I stole money from him—even the God which he worshipped," answered Hayraddin, with perfect composure; "he detected me, and beat me—I stabbed him with my knife, fled to the woods, and was again united to my people."

"Wretch!" said Durward, "did you murder your benefactor?"

"What had he to do to burden me with his benefits?—The Zingaro boy was no house-bred cur, to dog the heels of his master, and crouch beneath his blows, for scraps of food—He was the imprisoned wolf-whelp, which at the first opportunity broke his chain, rended his master, and returned to the wilderness."

There was another pause, when the young Scot, with a view of still farther investigating the character and purpose of this suspicious guide, asked Hayraddin, "Whether it was not true that his people, amid their ignorance, pretended to a knowledge of futurity, which was not given to the sages, philosophers, and divines, of more polished society?"

"We pretend to it," said Hayraddin, "and it is with justice."

"How can it be that so high a gift is bestowed on so abject a race?" said Quentin.

"Can I tell you?" answered Hayraddin—"Yes, I may indeed,

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but it is when you shall explain to me why the dog can trace the footsteps of a man, while man, the nobler animal, hath not power to trace those of the dog. These powers, which seem to you so wonderful, are instinctive in our race. From the lines on the face and on the hand, we can tell the future fate of those who consult us, even as surely as you know from the blossom of the tree in spring, what fruit it will bear in the harvest."

"I doubt of your knowledge, and defy you to the proof."

"Defy me not, Sir Squire," said Hayraddin Maugrabin—"I can tell you, that, say what you will of your religion, the Goddess whom you worship rides in this company."

"Peace!" said Quentin in astonishment; "on thy life, not a word farther but in answer to what I ask thee.—Canst thou be faithful?"

"I can—all men can," said the Bohemian.

"But *wilt* thou be faithful?"

"Wouldst thou believe me the more should I swear it?" answered Maugrabin with a sneer.

"Thy life is in my hand," said the young Scot.

"Strike, and see whether I fear to die," answered the Bohemian.

"Will money render thee a trusty guide?" demanded Durward.

"If I be not such without it, No," replied the heathen.

"Then what will bind thee?" asked the Scot.

"Kindness," replied the Bohemian.

"Shall I swear to show thee such, if thou art true guide to us on this pilgrimage?"

"No," replied Hayraddin, "it were extravagant waste of a commodity so rare. To thee I am bound already."

"How?" exclaimed Durward, more surprised than ever.

"Remember the chestnut-trees on the banks of the Cher! The victim whose body thou didst cut down was my brother, Zamet the Maugrabin."

"And yet," said Quentin, "I find you in correspondence with those very officers by whom your brother was done to death; for it was one of them who directed me where to meet with you—the same, doubtless, who procured yonder ladies your services as a guide."

"What can we do?" answered Hayraddin gloomily—"These men deal with us as the sheep-dogs do with the flock; they pro-

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tect us for a while, drive us hither and thither at their pleasure, and always end by guiding us to the shambles."

Quentin had afterwards occasion to learn that the Bohemian spoke truth in this particular, and that the Provost-guard, employed to suppress the vagabond bands by which the kingdom was infested, entertained correspondence among them, and forbore for a certain time the exercise of their duty, which always at last ended in conducting their allies to the gallows. This is a sort of political relation between thief and officer, for the profitable exercise of their mutual professions, which has subsisted in all countries, and is by no means unknown to our own.

Durward, parting from the guide, fell back to the rest of the retinue, very little satisfied with the character of Hayraddin, and entertaining little confidence in the professions of gratitude which he had personally made to him. He proceeded to sound the other two men who had been assigned him for attendants, and he was concerned to find them stupid, and as unfit to assist him with counsel, as in the rencounter they had shown themselves reluctant to use their weapons.

"It is all the better," said Quentin to himself, his spirit rising with the apprehended difficulties of his situation; "that lovely young lady shall owe all to me.—What one hand—ay, and one head can do—methinks I can boldly count upon. I have seen my father's house on fire, and him and my brothers lying dead amongst the flames—I gave not an inch back, but fought it out to the last. Now I am two years older, and have the best and fairest cause to bear me well that ever kindled mettle within a brave man's bosom."

Acting upon this resolution, the attention and activity which Quentin bestowed during the journey had in it something that gave him the appearance of ubiquity. His principal and most favourite post was of course by the side of the ladies; who, sensible of his extreme attention to their safety, began to converse with him in almost the tone of familiar friendship, and appeared to take great pleasure in the *naïveté*, yet shrewdness, of his conversation. Yet Quentin did not suffer the fascination of this intercourse to interfere with the vigilant discharge of his duty.

If he was often by the side of the Countesses, labouring to describe to the natives of a level country the Grampian mountains, and, above all, the beauties of Glen-houlakin—he was

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as often riding with Hayraddin in the front of the cavalcade, questioning him about the road and the resting-places, and recording his answers in his mind, to ascertain whether, upon cross-examination, he could discover anything like meditated treachery. As often again he was in the rear, endeavouring to secure the attachment of the two horsemen by kind words, gifts, and promises of additional recompense when their task should be accomplished.

In this way they travelled for more than a week, through bye-paths and unfrequented districts, and by circuitous routes, in order to avoid large towns. Nothing remarkable occurred, though they now and then met strolling gangs of Bohemians, who respected them, as under the conduct of one of their tribe—straggling soldiers, or perhaps banditti, who deemed their party too strong to be attacked—or parties of the Marechaussée, as they would now be termed, whom Louis, who searched the wounds of the land with steel and cautery, employed to suppress the disorderly bands which infested the interior. These last suffered them to pursue their way unmolested, by virtue of a pass-word, with which Quentin had been furnished for that purpose by the King himself.

Their resting-places were chiefly the monasteries, most of which were obliged by the rules of their foundation to receive pilgrims, under which character the ladies travelled, with hospitality, and without any troublesome inquiries into their rank and character, which most persons of distinction were desirous of concealing while in the discharge of their vows. The pretence of weariness was usually employed by the Countesses of Croye as an excuse for instantly retiring to rest, and Quentin, as their Major Domo, arranged all that was necessary betwixt them and their entertainers, with a shrewdness which saved them all trouble, and an alacrity that failed not to excite a corresponding degree of good will on the part of those who were thus sedulously attended to.

One circumstance gave Quentin peculiar trouble, which was the character and nation of his guide; who, as a heathen and an infidel vagabond, addicted, besides, to occult arts (the badge of all his tribe), was often looked upon as a very improper guest for the holy resting-places at which the company usually halted, and was not in consequence admitted within even the outer circuit of their walls save with extreme reluctance. This

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was very embarrassing; for, on the one hand, it was necessary to keep in good humour a man who was possessed of the secret of their expedition; and, on the other, Quentin deemed it indispensable to maintain a vigilant though secret watch on Hayraddin's conduct, in order that, as far as might be, he should hold no communication with any one without being observed. This, of course, was impossible if the Bohemian was lodged without the precincts of the convent at which they stopped, and Durward could not help thinking that Hayraddin was desirous of bringing about this latter arrangement; for, instead of keeping himself still and quiet in the quarters allotted to him, his conversation, tricks, and songs, were, at the same time, so entertaining to the novices and younger brethren, and so unedifying in the opinion of the seniors of the fraternity, that, in more cases than one, it required all the authority, supported by threats, which Quentin could exert over him, to restrain his irreverent and untimeous jocularity, and all the interest he could make with the Superiors, to prevent the heathen hound from being thrust out of doors. He succeeded, however, by the adroit manner in which he apologised for the acts of indecorum committed by their attendant, and the skill with which he hinted the hope of his being brought to a better sense of principles and behaviour, by the neighbourhood of holy relics, consecrated buildings, and, above all, of men dedicated to religion.

But upon the tenth or twelfth day of their journey, after they had entered Flanders, and were approaching the town of Namur, all the efforts of Quentin became inadequate to suppress the consequences of the scandal given by his heathen guide. The scene was a Franciscan convent, and of a strict and reformed order, and the Prior a man who afterwards died in the odour of sanctity. After rather more than the usual scruples (which were, indeed, in such a case to be expected) had been surmounted, the obnoxious Bohemian at length obtained quarters in an outhouse inhabited by a lay-brother who acted as gardener. The ladies retired to their apartment, as usual, and the Prior, who chanced to have some distant alliances and friends in Scotland, and who was fond of hearing foreigners tell of their native countries, invited Quentin, with whose mien and conduct he seemed much pleased, to a slight monastic refection in his own cell. Finding the Father a man of intelligence, Quentin did not neglect the opportunity

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of making himself acquainted with the state of affairs in the country of Liege, of which, during the last two days of their journey, he had heard such reports, as made him very apprehensive for the security of his charge during the remainder of their route, nay, even of the Bishop's power to protect them, when they should be safely conducted to his residence. The replies of the Prior were not very consolatory.

He said, that "the people of Liege were wealthy burghers, who, like Jeshurun of old, had waxed fat and kicked—that they were uplifted in heart because of their wealth and their privileges—that they had divers disputes with the Duke of Burgundy, their liege lord, upon the subject of imposts and immunities—and that they had repeatedly broken out into open mutiny, whereat the Duke was so much incensed, as being a man of a hot and fiery nature, that he had sworn, by Saint George, on the next provocation, he would make the city of Liege like to the desolation of Babylon, and the downfall of Tyre, a hissing and a reproach to the whole territory of Flanders."

"And he is a prince, by all report, likely to keep such a vow," said Quentin; "so the men of Liege will probably beware how they give him occasion."

"It were to be so hoped," said the Prior; "and such are the prayers of the godly in the land, who would not that the blood of the citizens were poured forth like water, and that they should perish, even as utter castaways, ere they make their peace with Heaven. Also the good Bishop labours night and day to preserve peace, as well becometh a servant of the altar; for it is written in Holy Scripture, *Beati pacifici*. But"—— here the good Prior stopped, with a deep sigh.

Quentin modestly urged the great importance of which it was to the ladies whom he attended, to have some assured information respecting the internal state of the country, and what an act of Christian charity it would be, if the worthy and reverend Father would enlighten them upon that subject.

"It is one," said the Prior, "on which no man speaks with willingness; for those who speak evil of the powerful, *etiam in cubiculo*, may find that a winged thing shall carry the matter to his ears. Nevertheless, to render you, who seem an ingenuous youth, and your ladies, who are devout votaresses accomplishing a holy pilgrimage, the little service that is in my power, I will be plain with you."

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He then looked cautiously round, and lowered his voice, as if afraid of being overheard.

"The people of Liege," he said, "are privily instigated to their frequent mutinies by men of Belial, who pretend, but, as I hope, falsely, to have commission to that effect from our most Christian King; whom, however, I hold to deserve that term better than were consistent with his thus disturbing the peace of a neighbouring state. Yet so it is, that his name is freely used by those who uphold and inflame the discontents at Liege. There is, moreover, in the land, a nobleman of good descent, and fame in warlike affairs; but otherwise, so to speak, *Lapis offensionis et petra scandali*,—a stumbling-block of offence to the countries of Burgundy and Flanders. His name is William de la Marck."

"Called William with the Beard," said the young Scot, "or the Wild Boar of Ardennes?"

"And rightly so called, my son," said the Prior; "because he is as the wild boar of the forest, which treadeth down with his hoofs, and rendeth with his tusks. And he hath formed to himself a band of more than a thousand men, all, like himself, contemners of civil and ecclesiastical authority, and holds himself independent of the Duke of Burgundy, and maintains himself and his followers by rapine and wrong, wrought, without distinction, upon churchmen and laymen. *Imposuit manus in Christos Domini*,—he hath stretched forth his hand upon the anointed of the Lord, regardless of what is written,—'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no wrong.'—Even to our poor house did he send for sums of gold and sums of silver, as a ramson for our lives, and those of our brethren; to which we returned a Latin supplication stating our inability to answer his demand, and exhorting him in the words of the preacher, *Ne moliaris amico tuo malum, cum habet in te fiduciam.* Nevertheless, this Gulielmus Barbatus, this William de la Marck, as completely ignorant of humane letters as of humanity itself, replied, in his ridiculous jargon, '*Si non payatis, brulabo monasterium vestrum.*'"*

"Of which rude Latin, however, you, my good father," said the youth, "were at no loss to conceive the meaning?"

* A similar story is told of the Duke of Vendome, who answered in this sort of macaronic Latin the classical expostulations of a German convent against the imposition of a contribution.

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"Alas! my son," said the Prior, "Fear and Necessity are shrewd interpreters; and we were obliged to melt down the silver vessels of our altar to satisfy the rapacity of this cruel chief—May Heaven requite it to him sevenfold! *Pereat improbus—Amen, amen, anathema esto!*"

"I marvel," said Quentin, "that the Duke of Burgundy, who is so strong and powerful, doth not bait this boar to purpose, of whose ravages I have already heard so much."

"Alas! my son," said the Prior, "the Duke Charles is now at Peronne, assembling his captains of hundreds and his captains of thousands, to make war against France; and thus, while Heaven hath set discord between the hearts of those great princes, the country is misused by such subordinate oppressors. But it is in evil time that the Duke neglects the cure of these internal gangrenes; for this William de la Marck hath of late entertained open communication with Rouslaer and Pavillon, the chiefs of the discontented at Liege, and it is to be feared he will soon stir them up to some desperate enterprise."

"But the Bishop of Liege," said Quentin, "he hath still power enough to subdue this disquieted and turbulent spirit—hath he not, good father?—Your answer to this question concerns me much."

"The Bishop, my child," replied the Prior, "hath the sword of Saint Peter, as well as the keys. He hath power as a secular prince, and he hath the protection of the mighty House of Burgundy; he hath also spiritual authority as a prelate, and he supports both with a reasonable force of good soldiers and men-at-arms. This William de la Marck was bred in his household, and bound to him by many benefits. But he gave vent, even in the court of the Bishop, to his fierce and bloodthirsty temper, and was expelled thence for a homicide committed on one of the Bishop's chief domestics. From thenceforward, being banished from the good Prelate's presence, he hath been his constant and unrelenting foe; and now, I grieve to say, he hath girded his loins, and strengthened his horn against him."

"You consider, then, the situation of the worthy Prelate as being dangerous?" said Quentin, very anxiously.

"Alas! my son," said the good Franciscan, "what or who is there in this weary wilderness, whom we may not hold as in danger? But Heaven forefend, I should speak of the reverend Prelate as one whose peril is imminent. He has much treasure,

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true counsellors, and brave soldiers; and, moreover, a messenger who passed hither to the eastward yesterday, saith that the Duke of Burgundy hath despatched, upon the Bishop's request, an hundred men-at-arms to his assistance. This reinforcement, with the retinue belonging to each lance, are enough to deal with William de la Marck, on whose name be sorrow!—Amen."

At this crisis their conversation was interrupted by the Sacristan, who, in a voice almost inarticulate with anger, accused the Bohemian of having practised the most abominable arts of delusion among the younger brethren. He had added to their nightly meal cups of a heady and intoxicating cordial, of ten times the strength of the most powerful wine, under which several of the fraternity had succumbed,—and indeed, although the Sacristan had been strong to resist its influence, they might yet see, from his inflamed countenance and thick speech, that even he, the accuser himself, was in some degree affected by this unhallowed potation. Moreover, the Bohemian had sung songs of worldly vanity and impure pleasures; he had derided the cord of Saint Francis, made jest of his miracles, and termed his votaries fools and lazy knaves. Lastly, he had practised palmistry, and foretold to the young Father Cherubin, that he was beloved by a beautiful lady, who should make him father to a thriving boy.

The Father Prior listened to these complaints for some time in silence, as struck with mute horror by their enormous atrocity. When the Sacristan had concluded, he rose up, descended to the court of the convent, and ordered the lay brethren, on pain of the worst consequences of spiritual disobedience, to beat Hayraddin out of the sacred precincts, with their broom-staves and cart-whips.

This sentence was executed accordingly, in the presence of Quentin Durward, who, however vexed at the occurrence, easily saw that his interference would be of no avail.

The discipline inflicted upon the delinquent, notwithstanding the exhortations of the Superior, was more ludicrous than formidable. The Bohemian ran hither and thither through the court, amongst the clamour of voices, and noise of blows, some of which reached him not, because purposely misaimed; others, sincerely designed for his person, were eluded by his activity; and the few that fell upon his back and shoulders he took without either complaint or reply. The noise and riot was the

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greater, that the inexperienced cudgel-players, among whom Hayraddin ran the gauntlet, hit each other more frequently than they hit him; till at length, desirous of ending a scene which was more scandalous than edifying, the Prior commanded the wicket to be flung open, and the Bohemian, darting through it with the speed of lightning, fled forth into the moonlight.

During this scene, a suspicion which Durward had formerly entertained, recurred with additional strength. Hayraddin had, that very morning, promised to him more modest and discreet behaviour than he was wont to exhibit, when they rested in a convent on their journey; yet he had broken his engagement, and had been even more offensively obstreperous than usual. Something probably lurked under this; for whatever were the Bohemian's deficiencies, he lacked neither sense, nor, when he pleased, self-command; and might it not be probable that he wished to hold some communication, either with his own horde or some one else, from which he was debarred in the course of the day, by the vigilance with which he was watched by Quentin, and had recourse to this stratagem in order to get himself turned out of the convent?

No sooner did this suspicion dart once more through Quentin's mind, than, alert as he always was in his motions, he resolved to follow his cudgelled guide, and observe (secretly if possible) how he disposed of himself. Accordingly, when the Bohemian fled, as already mentioned, out at the gate of the convent, Quentin, hastily explaining to the Prior the necessity of keeping sight of his guide, followed in pursuit of him.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

THE ESPIED SPY.

> What, the rude ranger? and spied spy?—hands off—
> You are for no such rustics.
>
> BEN JONSON'S TALE OF ROBIN HOOD.

WHEN Quentin sallied from the convent, he could mark the precipitate retreat of the Bohemian, whose dark figure was seen in the far moonlight flying with the speed of a flogged hound quite

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through the street of the little village, and across the level meadow that lay beyond.

"My friend runs fast," said Quentin to himself; "but he must run faster yet, to escape the fleetest foot that ever pressed the heather of Glen-houlakin."

Being fortunately without his cloak and armour, the Scottish mountaineer was at liberty to put forth a speed which was unrivalled in his own glens, and which, notwithstanding the rate at which the Bohemian ran, was likely soon to bring his pursuer up with him. This was not, however, Quentin's object; for he considered it more essential to watch Hayraddin's motions, than to interrupt them. He was the rather led to this by the steadiness with which the Bohemian directed his course; and which, continuing, even after the impulse of the violent expulsion had subsided, seemed to indicate that his career had some more certain goal for its object than could have suggested itself to a person unexpectedly turned out of good quarters when midnight was approaching, to seek a new place of repose. He never even looked behind him; and consequently Durward was enabled to follow him unobserved. At length the Bohemian having traversed the meadow, and attained the side of a little stream, the banks of which were clothed with alders and willows, Quentin observed that he stood still, and blew a low note on his horn, which was answered by a whistle at some little distance.

"This is a rendezvous," thought Quentin; "but how shall I come near enough to overhear what passes? the sound of my steps, and the rustling of the boughs through which I must force my passage, will betray me, unless I am cautious—I will stalk them, by Saint Andrew, as if they were Glen-isla deer—they shall learn that I have not conned woodcraft for nought. Yonder they meet, the two shadows—and two of them there are—odds against me if I am discovered, and if their purpose be unfriendly, as is much to be doubted. And then the Countess Isabelle loses her poor friend!—Well, and he were not worthy to be called such, if he were not ready to meet a dozen in her behalf.—Have I not crossed swords with Dunois, the best knight in France, and shall I fear a tribe of yonder vagabonds? Pshaw!—God and Saint Andrew to friend, they will find me both stout and wary."

Thus resolving, and with a degree of caution taught him by his silvan habits, our friend descended into the channel of the

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little stream, which varied in depth, sometimes scarce covering his shoes, sometimes coming up to his knees, and so crept along, his form concealed by the boughs overhanging the bank, and his steps unheard amid the ripple of the water. (We have ourselves, in the days of yore, thus approached the nest of the wakeful raven.) In this manner the Scot drew near unperceived, until he distinctly heard the voices of those who were the subject of his observation, though he could not distinguish the words. Being at this time under the drooping branches of a magnificent weeping willow, which almost swept the surface of the water, he caught hold of one of its boughs, by the assistance of which, exerting at once much agility, dexterity, and strength, he raised himself up into the body of the tree, and sat, secure from discovery, among the central branches.

From this situation he could discover that the person with whom Hayraddin was now conversing was one of his own tribe, and, at the same time, he perceived, to his great disappointment, that no approximation could enable him to comprehend their language, which was totally unknown to him. They laughed much; and as Hayraddin made a sign of skipping about, and ended by rubbing his shoulder with his hand, Durward had no doubt that he was relating the story of the bastinading which he had sustained previous to his escape from the convent.

On a sudden, a whistle was again heard in the distance, which was once more answered by a low tone or two of Hayraddin's horn. Presently afterwards, a tall, stout, soldierly-looking man, a strong contrast in point of thewes and sinews to the small and slender-limbed Bohemians, made his appearance. He had a broad baldric over his shoulder, which sustained a sword that hung almost across his person; his hose were much slashed, through which slashes was drawn silk or tiffany, of various colours; they were tied by at least five hundred points or strings, made of ribbon, to the tight buff-jacket which he wore, and the right sleeve of which displayed a silver boar's head, the crest of his Captain. A very small hat sat jauntily on one side of his head, from which descended a quantity of curled hair, which fell on each side of a broad face, and mingled with as broad a beard, about four inches long. He held a long lance in his hand; and his whole equipment was that of one of the German adventurers, who were known by the name of lanzknechts, in English, spearmen, who constituted a formidable part of the infantry of the

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period. These mercenaries were, of course, a fierce and rapacious soldiery, and having an idle tale current among themselves, that a lanzknecht was refused admittance into heaven on account of his vices, and into hell on the score of his tumultuous, mutinous, and insubordinate disposition, they manfully acted as if they neither sought the one, nor eschewed the other.

"Donner and blitz!" was his first salutation, in a sort of German-French, which we can only imperfectly imitate, "why have you kept me dancing in attendance dis dree nights?"

"I could not see you sooner, Meinherr," said Hayraddin, very submissively; "there is a young Scot, with as quick an eye as the wild-cat, who watches my least motions. He suspects me already, and, should he find his suspicion confirmed, I were a dead man on the spot, and he would carry back the women into France again."

"Was henker!" said the lanzknecht; "we are three—we will attack them to-morrow, and carry the women off without going farther. You said the two valets were cowards—you and your comrade may manage them, and der Toifel sall hold me, but I match your Scots wild-cat."

"You will find that foolhardy," said Hayraddin; "for, besides that we ourselves count not much in fighting, this spark hath matched himself with the best knight in France, and come off with honour—I have seen those who saw him press Dunois hard enough."

"Hagel and sturmwetter! It is but your cowardice that speaks," said the German soldier.

"I am no more a coward than yourself," said Hayraddin; "but my trade is not fighting.—If you keep the appointment where it was laid, it is well—if not, I guide them safely to the Bishop's Palace, and William de la Marck may easily possess himself of them there, provided he is half as strong as he pretended a week since."

"Potz tousend!" said the soldier, "we are as strong and stronger; but we hear of a hundreds of the lances of Burgund, —das ist,—see you,—five men to a lance do make five hundreds, and then hold me the devil, they will be fainer to seek for us, than we to seek for them; for der Bischoff hath a goot force on footing—ay, indeed!"

"You must then hold to the ambuscade at the Cross of the Three Kings, or give up the adventure," said the Bohemian.

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"Geb up—geb up the adventure of the rich bride for our noble hauptman—Toifel! I will charge through hell first.—Mein soul, we will be all princes and hertzogs, whom they call dukes, and we will hab a snab at the wein-kellar, and at the mouldy French crowns, and it may be at the pretty garces too, when He with de beard is weary on them."

"The ambuscade at the Cross of the Three Kings then still holds?" said the Bohemian.

"Mein Got, ay,—you will swear to bring them there; and when they are on their knees before the cross, and down from off their horses, which all men do, except such black heathens as thou, we will make in on them, and they are ours."

"Ay; but I promised this piece of necessary villany only on one condition," said Hayraddin.—"I will not have a hair of the young man's head touched. If you swear this to me, by your Three dead Men of Cologne, I will swear to you, by the Seven Night Walkers, that I will serve you truly as to the rest. And if you break your oath, the Night Walkers shall wake you seven nights from your sleep, between night and morning, and, on the eighth, they shall strangle and devour you."

"But, donner and hagel, what need you be so curious about the life of this boy, who is neither your bloot nor kin?" said the German.

"No matter for that, honest Heinrick; some men have pleasure in cutting throats, some in keeping them whole—So swear to me, that you will spare him life and limb, or by the bright star Aldeboran, this matter shall go no farther—Swear, and by the Three Kings, as you call them, of Cologne—I know you care for no other oath."

"Du bist ein comische man," said the lanzknecht; "I swear"——

"Not yet," said the Bohemian—"Faces about, brave lanzknecht, and look to the east, else the Kings may not hear you."

The soldier took the oath in the manner prescribed, and then declared that he would be in readiness, observing the place was quite convenient, being scarce five miles from their present leaguer.

"But were it not making sure work to have a fahnlein of riders on the other road, by the left side of the inn, which might trap them if they go that way?"

The Bohemian considered a moment, and then answered,

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"No—the appearance of their troops in that direction might alarm the garrison of Namur, and then they would have a doubtful fight, instead of assured success. Besides, they shall travel on the right bank of the Maes, for I can guide them which way I will; for, sharp as this same Scottish mountaineer is, he hath never asked any one's advice, save mine, upon the direction of their route.—Undoubtedly, I was assigned to him by an assured friend, whose word no man mistrusts till they come to know him a little."

"Hark ye, friend Hayraddin," said the soldier, "I would ask you somewhat.—You and your bruder were, as you say yourself, gross sternen-deuter, that is, star-lookers and geister-seers—Now, what henker was it made you not foresee him, your bruder Zamet, to be hanged?"

"I will tell you, Heinrick," said Hayraddin;—"if I could have known my brother was such a fool as to tell the counsel of King Louis to Duke Charles of Burgundy, I could have foretold his death as sure as I can foretell fair weather in July. Louis hath both ears and hands at the Court of Burgundy, and Charles's counsellors love the chink of French gold as well as thou dost the clatter of a wine-pot.—But fare-thee-well, and keep appointment—I must await my early Scot a bow-shot without the gate of the den of the lazy swine yonder, else will he think me about some excursion which bodes no good to the success of his journey."

"Take a draught of comfort first," said the lanzknecht, tendering him a flask,—"but I forget; thou art beast enough to drink nothing but water, like a vile vassal of Mahound and Termagund."

"Thou art thyself a vassal of the wine-measure and the flagon," said the Bohemian,—"I marvel not that thou art only trusted with the bloodthirsty and violent part of executing what better heads have devised.—He must drink no wine, who would know the thoughts of others, or hide his own. But why preach to thee, who hast a thirst as eternal as a sandbank in Arabia?—Fare-thee-well.—Take my comrade Tuisco with thee—his appearance about the monastery may breed suspicion."

The two worthies parted, after each had again pledged himself to keep the rendezvous at the Cross of the Three Kings.

Quentin Durward watched until they were out of sight, and then descended from his place of concealment, his heart throb-

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bing at the narrow escape which he and his fair charge had made—if, indeed, it could yet be achieved—from a deep-laid plan of villany. Afraid, on his return to the monastery, of stumbling upon Hayraddin, he made a long detour, at the expense of traversing some very rough ground, and was thus enabled to return to his asylum on a different point from that by which he left it.

On the route, he communed earnestly with himself concerning the safest plan to be pursued. He had formed the resolution, when he first heard Hayraddin avow his treachery, to put him to death so soon as the conference broke up, and his companions were at a sufficient distance; but when he heard the Bohemian express so much interest in saving his own life, he felt it would be ungrateful to execute upon him, in its rigour, the punishment his treachery had deserved. He therefore resolved to spare his life, and even, if possible, still to use his services as a guide, under such precautions as should ensure the security of the precious charge, to the preservation of which his own life was internally devoted.

But whither were they to turn?—the Countesses of Croye could neither obtain shelter in Burgundy, from which they had fled, nor in France, from which they had been in a manner expelled. The violence of Duke Charles in the one country, was scarcely more to be feared than the cold and tyrannical policy of King Louis in the other. After deep thought, Durward could form no better or safer plan for their security, than that, evading the ambuscade, they should take the road to Liege by the left hand of the Maes, and throw themselves, as the ladies originally designed, upon the protection of the excellent Bishop. That Prelate's will to protect them could not be doubted, and, if reinforced by this Burgundian party of men-at-arms, he might be considered as having the power. At any rate, if the dangers to which he was exposed from the hostility of William de la Marck, and from the troubles in the city of Liege, appeared imminent, he would still be able to protect the unfortunate ladies until they could be despatched to Germany with a suitable escort.

To sum up this reasoning—for when is a mental argument conducted without some reference to selfish consideration?—Quentin imagined that the death or captivity to which King Louis had, in cold blood, consigned him, set him at liberty

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from his engagements to the Crown of France; which, therefore, it was his determined purpose to renounce. The Bishop of Liege was likely, he concluded, to need soldiers, and he thought that, by the interposition of his fair friends, who now, especially the elder Countess, treated him with much familiarity, he might get some command, and perhaps might have the charge of conducting the Ladies of Croye to some place more safe than the neighbourhood of Liege. And, to conclude, the ladies had talked, although almost in a sort of jest, of raising the Countess's own vassals, and, as others did in those stormy times, fortifying her strong castle against all assailants whatever; they had jestingly asked Quentin, whether he would accept the perilous office of their Seneschal; and, on his embracing the office with ready glee and devotion, they had, in the same spirit, permitted him to kiss both their hands on their confidential and honourable appointment. Nay, he thought that the hand of the Countess Isabelle, one of the best formed and most beautiful to which true vassal ever did such homage, trembled when his lips rested on it a moment longer than ceremony required, and that some confusion appeared on her cheek and in her eye as she withdrew it. Something might come of all this; and what brave man, at Quentin Durward's age, but would gladly have taken the thoughts which it awakened, into the considerations which were to determine his conduct?

This point settled, he had next to consider in what degree he was to use the farther guidance of the faithless Bohemian. He had renounced his first thought of killing him in the wood, and, if he took another guide, and dismissed him alive, it would be sending the traitor to the camp of William de la Marck, with intelligence of their motions. He thought of taking the Prior into his counsels, and requesting him to detain the Bohemian by force, until they should have time to reach the Bishop's castle; but, on reflection, he dared not hazard such a proposition to one who was timid both as an old man and a friar, who held the safety of his convent the most important object of his duty, and who trembled at the mention of the Wild Boar of Ardennes.

At length Durward settled a plan of operation on which he could the better reckon, as the execution rested entirely upon himself; and, in the cause in which he was engaged, he felt

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himself capable of everything. With a firm and bold heart, though conscious of the dangers of his situation, Quentin might be compared to one walking under a load, of the weight of which he is conscious, but which yet is not beyond his strength and power of endurance. Just as his plan was determined, he reached the convent.

Upon knocking gently at the gate, a brother, considerately stationed for that purpose by the Prior, opened it, and acquainted him that the brethren were to be engaged in the choir till daybreak, praying Heaven to forgive to the community the various scandals which had that evening taken place among them.

The worthy friar offered Quentin permission to attend their devotions; but his clothes were in such a wet condition, that the young Scot was obliged to decline the opportunity, and request permission, instead, to sit by the kitchen fire, in order to his attire being dried before morning; as he was particularly desirous that the Bohemian, when they should next meet, should observe no traces of his having been abroad during the night. The friar not only granted his request, but afforded him his own company, which fell in very happily with the desire which Durward had to obtain information concerning the two routes which he had heard mentioned by the Bohemian in his conversation with the lanzknecht. The friar, intrusted upon many occasions with the business of the convent abroad, was the person in the fraternity best qualified to afford him the information he requested, but observed, that, as true pilgrims, it became the duty of the ladies whom Quentin escorted, to take the road on the right side of the Maes, by the Cross of the Kings, where the blessed relics of Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar (as the Catholic Church has named the eastern Magi who came to Bethlehem with their offerings), had rested as they were transported to Cologne, and on which spot they had wrought many miracles.

Quentin replied, that the ladies were determined to observe all the holy stations with the utmost punctuality, and would certainly visit that of the Cross, either in going to or returning from Cologne, but they had heard reports that the road by the right side of the river was at present rendered unsafe by the soldiers of the ferocious William de la Marck.

"Now may Heaven forbid," said Father Francis, "that the Wild Boar of Ardennes should again make his lair so near us!

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—Nevertheless, the broad Maes will be a good barrier betwixt us, even should it so chance."

"But it will be no barrier between my ladies and the marauder, should we cross the river, and travel on the right bank," answered the Scot.

"Heaven will protect its own, young man," said the friar; "for it were hard to think that the Kings of yonder blessed city of Cologne, who will not endure that a Jew or Infidel should even enter within the walls of their town, could be oblivious enough to permit their worshippers, coming to their shrine as true pilgrims, to be plundered and misused by such a miscreant dog as this Boar of Ardennes, who is worse than a whole desert of Saracen heathens, and all the ten tribes of Israel to boot."

Whatever reliance Quentin, as a sincere Catholic, was bound to rest upon the special protection of Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar, he could not but recollect, that the pilgrim habits of the ladies being assumed out of mere earthly policy, he and his charge could scarcely expect their countenance on the present occasion; and therefore resolved, as far as possible, to avoid placing the ladies in any predicament where miraculous interposition might be necessary; whilst, in the simplicity of his good faith, he himself vowed a pilgrimage to the Three Kings of Cologne in his own proper person, provided the simulate design of those over whose safety he was now watching, should be permitted by those reasonable and royal as well as sainted personages, to attain the desired effect.

That he might enter into this obligation with all solemnity, he requested the friar to show him into one of the various chapels which opened from the main body of the church of the convent, where, upon his knees, and with sincere devotion, he ratified the vow which he had made internally. The distant sound of the choir, the solemnity of the deep and dead hour which he had chosen for this act of devotion, the effect of the glimmering lamp with which the little Gothic building was illuminated—all contributed to throw Quentin's mind into the state when it most readily acknowledges its human frailty, and seeks that supernatural aid and protection, which, in every worship, must be connected with repentance for past sins, and resolutions of future amendment. That the object of his devotion was misplaced, was not the fault of Quentin; and its

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purpose being sincere, we can scarce suppose it unacceptable to the only true Deity, who regards the motives, and not the forms of prayer, and in whose eyes the sincere devotion of a heathen is more estimable than the specious hypocrisy of a Pharisee.

Having commended himself and his helpless companions to the Saints, and to the keeping of Providence, Quentin at length retired to rest, leaving the friar much edified by the depth and sincerity of his devotion.

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

PALMISTRY.

When many a merry tale and many a song
Cheer'd the rough road, we wished the rough road long.
The rough road, then, returning in a round,
Mock'd our enchanted steps, for all was fairy ground.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

By peep of day Quentin Durward had forsaken his little cell, had roused the sleepy grooms, and, with more than his wonted care, seen that everything was prepared for the day's journey. Girths and bridles, the horse-furniture, and the shoes of the horses themselves, were carefully inspected with his own eyes, that there might be as little chance as possible of the occurrence of any of those casualties, which, petty as they seem, often interrupt or disconcert travelling. The horses were also, under his own inspection, carefully fed, so as to render them fit for a long day's journey, or, if that should be necessary, for a hasty flight.

Quentin then betook himself to his own chamber, armed himself with unusual care, and belted on his sword with the feeling at once of approaching danger, and of stern determination to dare it to the uttermost.

These generous feelings gave him a loftiness of step, and a dignity of manner, which the Ladies of Croye had not yet observed in him, though they had been highly pleased and interested by the grace, yet *naïveté*, of his general behaviour and conversation, and the mixture of shrewd intelligence which naturally belonged to him, with the simplicity arising from his

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secluded education and distant country. He let them understand, that it would be necessary that they should prepare for their journey this morning rather earlier than usual; and, accordingly, they left the convent immediately after a morning repast, for which, as well as the other hospitalities of the House, the ladies made acknowledgment by a donation to the altar, befitting rather their rank than their appearance. But this excited no suspicion, as they were supposed to be Englishwomen; and the attribute of superior wealth attached at that time to the insular character as strongly as in our own day.

The Prior blessed them as they mounted to depart, and congratulated Quentin on the absence of his heathen guide; "for," said the venerable man, "better stumble in the path than be upheld by the arm of a thief or robber."

Quentin was not quite of his opinion; for, dangerous as he knew the Bohemian to be, he thought he could use his services, and, at the same time, baffle his treasonable purpose, now that he saw clearly to what it tended. But his anxiety upon this subject was soon at an end, for the little cavalcade was not an hundred yards from the monastery and the village before Maugrabin joined it, riding as usual on his little active and wild-looking jennet. Their road led them along the side of the same brook where Quentin had overheard the mysterious conference of the preceding evening, and Hayraddin had not long rejoined them, ere they passed under the very willow-tree which had afforded Durward the means of concealment, when he became an unsuspected hearer of what then passed betwixt that false guide and the lanzknecht.

The recollections which the spot brought back stirred Quentin to enter abruptly into conversation with his guide, whom hitherto he had scarce spoken to.

"Where hast thou found night-quarter, thou profane knave?" said the Scot.

"Your wisdom may guess, by looking on my gaberdine," answered the Bohemian, pointing to his dress, which was covered with the seeds of hay.

"A good hay-stack," said Quentin, "is a convenient bed for an astrologer, and a much better than a heathen scoffer at our blessed religion, and its ministers, ever deserves."

"It suited my Klepper better than me, though," said Hayraddin, patting his horse on the neck; "for he had food and

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shelter at the same time. The old bald fools turned him loose, as if a wise man's horse could have infected with wit or sagacity a whole convent of asses. Lucky that Klepper knows my whistle, and follows me as truly as a hound, or we had never met again, and you in your turn might have whistled for a guide."

"I have told thee more than once," said Durward, sternly, "to restrain thy ribaldry when thou chancest to be in worthy men's company, a thing which, I believe, hath rarely happened to thee in thy life before now; and I promise thee, that did I hold thee as faithless a guide as I esteem thee a blasphemous and worthless caitiff, my Scottish dirk and thy heathenish heart had ere now been acquainted, although the doing such a deed were as ignoble as the sticking of swine."

"A wild boar is near akin to a sow," said the Bohemian, without flinching from the sharp look with which Quentin regarded him, or altering, in the slightest degree, the caustic indifference which he affected in his language; "and many men," he subjoined, "find both pride, pleasure, and profit, in sticking them."

Astonished at the man's ready confidence, and uncertain whether he did not know more of his own history and feelings than was pleasant for him to converse upon, Quentin broke off a conversation in which he had gained no advantage over Maugrabin, and fell back to his accustomed post beside the ladies.

We have already observed, that a considerable degree of familiarity had begun to establish itself between them. The elder Countess treated him (being once well assured of the nobility of his birth) like a favoured equal; and though her niece showed her regard to their protector less freely, yet, under every disadvantage of bashfulness and timidity, Quentin thought he could plainly perceive, that his company and conversation were not by any means indifferent to her.

Nothing gives such life and soul to youthful gaiety as the consciousness that it is successfully received; and Quentin had accordingly, during the former period of their journey, amused his fair charge with the liveliness of his conversation, and the songs and tales of his country, the former of which he sung in his native language, while his efforts to render the latter into his foreign and imperfect French, gave rise to a hundred little mistakes and errors of speech, as diverting as the narratives

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themselves. But on this anxious morning, he rode beside the Ladies of Croye without any of his usual attempts to amuse them, and they could not help observing his silence as something remarkable.

"Our young companion has seen a wolf," said the Lady Hameline, alluding to an ancient superstition, "and he has lost his tongue in consequence."*

"To say I had tracked a fox were nearer the mark," thought Quentin, but gave the reply no utterance.

"Are you well, Seignior Quentin?" said the Countess Isabelle, in a tone of interest at which she herself blushed, while she felt that it was something more than the distance between them warranted.

"He hath sat up carousing with the jolly friars," said the Lady Hameline; "the Scots are like the Germans, who spend all their mirth over the Rheinwein, and bring only their staggering steps to the dance in the evening, and their aching heads to the ladies' bower in the morning."

"Nay, gentle ladies," said Quentin, "I deserve not your reproach. The good friars were at their devotion all night; and for myself, my drink was barely a cup of their thinnest and most ordinary wine."

"It is the badness of his fare that has put him out of humour," said the Countess Isabelle. "Cheer up, Seignior Quentin; and should we ever visit my ancient Castle of Bracquemont together, if I myself should stand your cupbearer, and hand it to you, you shall have a generous cup of wine, that the like never grew upon the vines of Hochheim or Johannisberg."

"A glass of water, noble lady, from *your* hand"—Thus far did Quentin begin, but his voice trembled; and Isabelle continued, as if she had been insensible of the tenderness of the accentuation upon the personal pronoun.

"The wine was stocked in the deep vaults of Bracquemont, by my great-grandfather the Rhinegrave Godfrey," said the Countess Isabelle.

* "Vox duoque Mœrim
Jam fugit ipsa; lupi Mœrim videre priores."—VIRGILII ix. ecloga.

The commentators add, in explanation of this passage, the opinion of Pliny: "The being beheld by a wolf in Italy is accounted noxious, and is supposed to take away the speech of a man, if these animals behold him ere he sees them."

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"Who won the hand of her great-grandmother," interjected the Lady Hameline, interrupting her niece, "by proving himself the best son of chivalry, at the great tournament of Strasbourg —ten knights were slain in the lists. But those days are now over, and no one now thinks of encountering peril for the sake of honour, or to relieve distressed beauty."

To this speech, which was made in the tone in which a modern beauty, whose charms are rather on the wane, may be heard to condemn the rudeness of the present age, Quentin took upon him to reply, "that there was no lack of that chivalry which the Lady Hameline seemed to consider as extinct, and that, were it eclipsed everywhere else, it would still glow in the bosoms of the Scottish gentlemen."

"Hear him!" said the Lady Hameline; "he would have us believe, that in his cold and bleak country still lives the noble fire which has decayed in France and Germany! The poor youth is like a Swiss mountaineer, mad with partiality to his native land—he will next tell us of the vines and olives of Scotland."

"No, madam," said Durward; "of the wine and the oil of our mountains I can say little, more than that our swords can compel these rich productions, as tribute from our wealthier neighbours. But for the unblemished faith and unfaded honour of Scotland, I must now put to the proof how far you can repose trust in them, however mean the individual who can offer nothing more as a pledge of your safety."

"You speak mysteriously—you know of some pressing and present danger," said the Lady Hameline.

"I have read it in his eye for this hour past!" exclaimed the Lady Isabelle, clasping her hands. "Sacred Virgin, what will become of us?"

"Nothing, I hope, but what you would desire," answered Durward. "And now I am compelled to ask—Gentle ladies, can you trust me?"

"Trust you?" answered the Countess Hameline—"certainly—But why the question? Or how far do you ask our confidence?"

"I, on my part," said the Countess Isabelle, "trust you implicitly, and without condition. If you can deceive us, Quentin, I will no more look for truth, save in Heaven!"

"Gentle lady," replied Durward, highly gratified, "you do

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me but justice. My object is to alter our route, by proceeding directly by the left bank of the Maes to Liege, instead of crossing at Namur. This differs from the order assigned by King Louis, and the instructions given to the guide. But I heard news in the monastery of marauders on the right bank of the Maes, and of the march of Burgundian soldiers to suppress them. Both circumstances alarm me for your safety. Have I your permission so far to deviate from the route of your journey?"

"My ample and full permission," answered the younger lady.

"Cousin," said the Lady Hameline, "I believe with you that the youth means us well;—but bethink you—we transgress the instructions of King Louis, so positively iterated."

"And why should we regard his instructions?" said the Lady Isabelle. "I am, I thank Heaven for it, no subject of his; and, as a suppliant, he has abused the confidence he induced me to repose in him. I would not dishonour this young gentleman by weighing his word for an instant against the injunctions of yonder crafty and selfish despot."

"Now, may God bless you for that very word, lady," said Quentin, joyously; "and if I deserve not the trust it expresses, tearing with wild horses in this life, and eternal tortures in the next, were e'en too good for my deserts."

So saying, he spurred his horse, and rejoined the Bohemian. This worthy seemed of a remarkably passive, if not a forgiving temper. Injury or threat never dwelt, or at least seemed not to dwell, on his recollection; and he entered into the conversation which Durward presently commenced, just as if there had been no unkindly word betwixt them in the course of the morning.

The dog, thought the Scot, snarls not now, because he intends to clear scores with me at once and for ever, when he can snatch me by the very throat; but we will try for once whether we cannot foil a traitor at his own weapons.—"Honest Hayraddin," he said, "thou hast travelled with us for ten days, yet hast never shown us a specimen of your skill in fortune-telling; which you are, nevertheless, so fond of practising, that you must needs display your gifts in every convent at which we stop, at the risk of being repaid by a night's lodging under a hay-stack."

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"You have never asked me for a specimen of my skill," said the gipsy. "You are like the rest of the world, contented to ridicule those mysteries which they do not understand."

"Give me then a present proof of your skill," said Quentin; and, ungloving his hand, he held it out to the gipsy.

Hayraddin carefully regarded all the lines which crossed each other on the Scotchman's palm, and noted, with equally scrupulous attention, the little risings or swellings at the roots of the fingers, which were then believed as intimately connected with the disposition, habits, and fortunes of the individual, as the organs of the brain are pretended to be in our own time.

"Here is a hand," said Hayraddin, "which speaks of toils endured, and dangers encountered. I read in it an early acquaintance with the hilt of the sword; and yet some acquaintance also with the clasps of the mass-book."

"This of my past life you may have learned elsewhere," said Quentin; "tell me something of the future."

"This line from the hill of Venus," said the Bohemian, "not broken off abruptly, but attending and accompanying the line of life, argues a certain and large fortune by marriage, whereby the party shall be raised among the wealthy and the noble by the influence of successful love."

"Such promises you make to all who ask your advice," said Quentin; "they are part of your art."

"What I tell you is as certain," said Hayraddin, "as that you shall in brief space be menaced with mighty danger; which I infer from this bright blood-red line cutting the table-line transversely, and intimating stroke of sword, or other violence, from which you shall only be saved by the attachment of a faithful friend."

"Thyself, ha?" said Quentin, somewhat indignant that the chiromantist should thus practise on his credulity, and endeavour to found a reputation by predicting the consequences of his own treachery.

"My art," replied the Zingaro, "tells me nought that concerns myself."

"In this, then, the seers of my land," said Quentin, "excel your boasted knowledge; for their skill teaches them the dangers by which they are themselves beset. I left not my hills without having felt a portion of the double vision with which their inhabitants are gifted; and I will give thee a proof of it, in ex-

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change for thy specimen of palmistry. Hayraddin, the danger which threatens me lies on the right bank of the river—I will avoid it by travelling to Liege on the left bank."

The guide listened with an apathy, which, knowing the circumstances in which Maugrabin stood, Quentin could not by any means comprehend. "If you accomplish your purpose," was the Bohemian's reply, "the dangerous crisis will be transferred from your lot to mine."

"I thought," said Quentin, "that you said but now, that you could not presage your own fortune?"

"Not in the manner in which I have but now told you yours," answered Hayraddin; "but it requires little knowledge of Louis of Valois, to presage that he will hang your guide, because your pleasure was to deviate from the road which he recommended."

"The attaining with safety the purpose of the journey, and ensuring its happy termination," said Quentin, "must atone for a deviation from the exact line of the prescribed route."

"Ay," replied the Bohemian, "if you are sure that the King had in his own eye the same termination of the pilgrimage which he insinuated to you."

"And of what other termination is it possible that he could have been meditating? or why should you suppose he had any purpose in his thought, other than was avowed in his direction?" inquired Quentin.

"Simply," replied the Zingaro, "that those who know aught of the Most Christian King, are aware that the purpose about which he is most anxious, is always that which he is least willing to declare. Let our gracious Louis send twelve embassies, and I will forfeit my neck to the gallows a year before it is due, if in eleven of them there is not something at the bottom of the ink-horn more than the pen has written in the letters of credence."

"I regard not your foul suspicions," answered Quentin; "my duty is plain and peremptory—to convey these ladies in safety to Liege; and I take on me to think that I best discharge that duty in changing our prescribed route, and keeping the left side of the river Maes. It is likewise the direct road to Liege. By crossing the river, we should lose time, and incur fatigue to no purpose—Wherefore should we do so?"

"Only because pilgrims, as they call themselves, destined for Cologne," said Hayraddin, "do not usually descend the Maes so

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low as Liege; and that the route of the ladies will be accounted contradictory of their professed destination."

"If we are challenged on that account," said Quentin, "we will say that alarms of the wicked Duke of Gueldres, or of William de la Marck, or of the *Ecorcheurs* and lanzknechts, on the right side of the river, justify our holding by the left, instead of our intended route."

"As you will, my good seignior," replied the Bohemian—"I am, for my part, equally ready to guide you down the left as down the right side of the Maes—Your excuse to your master you must make out for yourself."

Quentin, although rather surprised, was, at the same time, pleased with the ready, or at least the unrepugnant acquiescence of Hayraddin in their change of route, for he needed his assistance as a guide, and yet had feared that the disconcerting of his intended act of treachery would have driven him to extremity. Besides, to expel the Bohemian from their society, would have been the ready mode to bring down William de la Marck, with whom he was in correspondence, upon their intended route; whereas, if Hayraddin remained with them, Quentin thought he could manage to prevent the Moor from having any communication with strangers, unless he was himself aware of it.

Abandoning, therefore, all thoughts of their original route, the little party followed that by the left bank of the broad Maes, so speedily and successfully, that the next day early brought them to the purposed end of their journey. They found that the Bishop of Liege, for the sake of his health, as he himself alleged, but rather, perhaps, to avoid being surprised by the numerous and mutinous population of the city, had established his residence in his beautiful Castle of Schonwaldt, about a mile without Liege.

Just as they approached the Castle, they saw the Prelate returning in long procession from the neighbouring city, in which he had been officiating at the performance of High Mass. He was at the head of a splendid train of religious, civil, and military men, mingled together, or, as the old ballad-maker expresses it,

> "With many a cross-bearer before,
> And many a spear behind."

The procession made a noble appearance, as, winding along the verdant banks of the broad Maes, it wheeled into, and was

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as it were devoured by, the huge Gothic portal of the Episcopal residence.

But when the party came more near, they found that circumstances around the Castle argued a doubt and sense of insecurity, which contradicted that display of pomp and power which they had just witnessed. Strong guards of the Bishop's soldiers were heedfully maintained all around the mansion and its immediate vicinity; and the prevailing appearances in an ecclesiastical residence, seemed to argue a sense of danger in the reverend Prelate, who found it necessary thus to surround himself with all the defensive precautions of war. The Ladies of Croye, when announced by Quentin, were reverently ushered into the great Hall, where they met with the most cordial reception from the Bishop, who met them there at the head of his little Court. He would not permit them to kiss his hand, but welcomed them with a salute, which had something in it of gallantry on the part of a prince to fine women, and something also of the holy affection of a pastor to the sisters of his flock.

Louis of Bourbon, the reigning Bishop of Liege, was in truth a generous and kind-hearted prince; whose life had not indeed been always confined, with precise strictness, within the bounds of his clerical profession; but who, notwithstanding, had uniformly maintained the frank and honourable character of the House of Bourbon, from which he was descended.

In later times, as age advanced, the Prelate had adopted habits more beseeming a member of the hierarchy than his early reign had exhibited, and was loved among the neighbouring princes, as a noble ecclesiastic, generous and magnificent in his ordinary mode of life, though preserving no very ascetic severity of character, and governing with an easy indifference, which, amid his wealthy and mutinous subjects, rather encouraged than subdued rebellious purposes.

The Bishop was so fast an ally of the Duke of Burgundy, that the latter claimed almost a joint sovereignty in his bishopric, and repaid the good-natured ease with which the Prelate admitted claims which he might easily have disputed, by taking his part on all occasions with the determined and furious zeal which was a part of his character. He used to say, he considered Liege as his own, the Bishop as his brother (indeed they might be accounted such, in consequence of the Duke having married for his first wife the Bishop's sister), and that he who annoyed

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Louis of Bourbon, had to do with Charles of Burgundy; a threat which, considering the character and the power of the prince who used it, would have been powerful with any but the rich and discontented city of Liege, where much wealth had, according to the ancient proverb, made wit waver.

The Prelate, as we have said, assured the Ladies of Croye of such intercession as his interest at the Court of Burgundy, used to the uttermost, might gain for them, and which, he hoped, might be the more effectual, as Campo-basso, from some late discoveries, stood rather lower than formerly in the Duke's personal favour. He promised them also such protection as it was in his power to afford; but the sigh with which he gave the warrant, seemed to allow that his power was more precarious than in words he was willing to admit.

"At every event, my dearest daughters," said the Bishop, with an air in which, as in his previous salute, a mixture of spiritual unction qualified the hereditary gallantry of the House of Bourbon, "Heaven forbid I should abandon the lamb to the wicked wolf, or noble ladies to the oppression of faitours. I am a man of peace, though my abode now rings with arms; but be assured I will care for your safety as for my own; and should matters become yet more distracted here, which, with our Lady's grace, we trust will be rather pacified than inflamed, we will provide for your safe-conduct to Germany; for not even the will of our brother and protector, Charles of Burgundy, shall prevail with us to dispose of you in any respect contrary to your own inclinations. We cannot comply with your request of sending you to a convent; for, alas! such is the influence of the sons of Belial among the inhabitants of Liege, that we know no retreat to which our authority extends, beyond the bounds of our own castle, and the protection of our soldiery. But here you are most welcome, and your train shall have all honourable entertainment; especially this youth whom you recommend so particularly to our countenance, and on whom in especial we bestow our blessing."

Quentin kneeled, as in duty bound, to receive the Episcopal benediction.

"For yourselves," proceeded the good Prelate, "you shall reside here with my sister Isabelle, a Canoness of Triers, and with whom you may dwell in all honour, even under the roof of so gay a bachelor as the Bishop of Liege."

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He gallantly conducted the ladies to his sister's apartment, as he concluded the harangue of welcome; and his Master of the Household, an officer, who, having taken Deacon's orders, held something between a secular and ecclesiastical character, entertained Quentin with the hospitality which his master enjoined, while the other personages of the retinue of the Ladies of Croye were committed to the inferior departments.

In this arrangement Quentin could not help remarking, that the presence of the Bohemian, so much objected to in country convents, seemed, in the household of this wealthy, and perhaps we might say worldly prelate, to attract neither objection nor remark.

CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

THE CITY.

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To any sudden act of mutiny.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

SEPARATED from the Lady Isabelle, whose looks had been for so many days his load-star, Quentin felt a strange vacancy and chillness of the heart, which he had not yet experienced in any of the vicissitudes to which his life had subjected him. No doubt the cessation of the close and unavoidable intercourse and intimacy betwixt them was the necessary consequence of the Countess having obtained a place of settled residence; for, under what pretext could she, had she meditated such an impropriety, have had a gallant young squire, such as Quentin, in constant attendance upon her?

But the shock of the separation was not the more welcome that it seemed unavoidable, and the proud heart of Quentin swelled at finding he was parted with like an ordinary postilion, or an escort whose duty is discharged; while his eyes sympathised so far as to drop a secret tear or two over the ruins of all those airy castles, so many of which he had employed himself in constructing during their too interesting journey. He made a manly, but, at first, a vain effort, to throw off this mental de-

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jection; and so, yielding to the feelings he could not suppress, he sat him down in one of the deep recesses formed by a window which lighted the great Gothic hall of Schonwaldt, and there mused upon his hard fortune, which had not assigned him rank or wealth sufficient to prosecute his daring suit.

Quentin tried to dispel the sadness which overhung him by despatching Charlet, one of the valets, with letters to the court of Louis, announcing the arrival of the Ladies of Croye at Liege. At length his natural buoyancy of temper returned, much excited by the title of an old *romaunt* which had been just printed at Strasbourg, and which lay beside him in the window, the title of which set forth,

> How the Squire of lowe degree
> Loved the King's daughter of Hongarie.*

While he was tracing the "letters blake" of the ditty so congenial to his own situation, Quentin was interrupted by a touch on the shoulder, and, looking up, beheld the Bohemian standing by him.

Hayraddin, never a welcome sight, was odious from his late treachery, and Quentin sternly asked him, why he dared take the freedom to touch a Christian and a gentleman?

"Simply," answered the Bohemian, "because I wished to know if the Christian gentleman had lost his feeling as well as his eyes and ears. I have stood speaking to you these five minutes, and you have stared on that scrap of yellow paper, as if it were a spell to turn you into a statue, and had already wrought half its purpose."

"Well, what dost thou want? Speak, and begone!"

"I want what all men want, though few are satisfied with it," said Hayraddin; "I want my due; my ten crowns of gold for guiding the ladies hither."

"With what face darest thou ask any guerdon beyond my sparing thy worthless life?" said Durward fiercely; "thou knowest that it was thy purpose to have betrayed them on the road."

"But I did *not* betray them," said Hayraddin; "if I had,

* [There are two written black-letter editions of this old English poem or tale, but only one perfect copy is known, from which it was reprinted by Ritson, in his *Ancient National Romances*, 1802; and since, more accurately, in Mr. Hazlitt's collected *Remains of Early Popular Poetry of England*, 1866.]

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I would have asked no guerdon from you or from them, but from him whom their keeping on the right-hand side of the river might have benefited. The party that I have served is the party who must pay me."

"Thy guerdon perish with thee, then, traitor," said Quentin, telling out the money. "Get thee to the Boar of Ardennes, or to the devil! but keep hereafter out of my sight, lest I send thee thither before thy time."

"The Boar of Ardennes!" repeated the Bohemian, with a stronger emotion of surprise than his features usually expressed; "it was then no vague guess—no general suspicion—which made you insist on changing the road?—Can it be—are there really in other lands arts of prophecy more sure than those of our wandering tribes? The willow-tree under which we spoke could tell no tales. But no—no—no—Dolt that I was!—I have it—I have it!—the willow by the brook near yonder convent—I saw you look towards it as you passed it, about half-a-mile from yon hive of drones—that could not indeed speak, but it might hide one who could hear! I will hold my councils in an open plain henceforth; not a bunch of thistles shall be near me for a Scot to shroud amongst—Ha! ha! the Scot hath beat the Zingaro at his own subtle weapons. But know, Quentin Durward, that you have foiled me to the marring of thine own fortune—Yes! the fortune I have told thee of, from the lines on thy hand, had been richly accomplished but for thine own obstinacy."

"By Saint Andrew," said Quentin, "thy impudence makes me laugh in spite of myself—How, or in what, should thy successful villany have been of service to me? I heard, indeed, that you did stipulate to save my life, which condition your worthy allies would speedily have forgotten, had we once come to blows—but in what thy betrayal of these ladies could have served me, but by exposing me to death or captivity, is a matter beyond human brains to conjecture."

"No matter thinking of it, then," said Hayraddin, "for I mean still to surprise you with my gratitude. Had you kept back my hire, I should have held that we were quit, and had left you to your own foolish guidance. As it is, I remain your debtor for yonder matter on the banks of the Cher."

"Methinks I have already taken out the payment in cursing and abusing thee," said Quentin.

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"Hard words, or kind ones," said the Zingaro, "are but wind, which make no weight in the balance. Had you struck me, indeed, instead of threatening"——

"I am likely enough to take out payment in that way, if you provoke me longer."

"I would not advise it," said the Zingaro; "such payment, made by a rash hand, might exceed the debt, and unhappily leave a balance on your side, which I am not one to forget or forgive. And now farewell, but not for a long space—I go to bid adieu to the Ladies of Croye."

"Thou?" said Quentin, in astonishment—"*thou* be admitted to the presence of the ladies, and here, where they are in a manner recluses, under the protection of the Bishop's sister, a noble canoness?—It is impossible."

"Marthon, however, waits to conduct me to their presence," said the Zingaro, with a sneer; "and I must pray your forgiveness if I leave you something abruptly."

He turned as if to depart, but instantly coming back, said, with a tone of deep and serious emphasis, "I know your hopes—they are daring, yet not vain if I aid them. I know your fears, they should teach prudence, not timidity. Every woman may be won. A count is but a nickname, which will befit Quentin as well as the other nickname of duke befits Charles, or that of king befits Louis."

Ere Durward could reply, the Bohemian had left the hall. Quentin instantly followed; but, better acquainted than the Scot with the passages of the house, Hayraddin kept the advantage which he had gotten; and the pursuer lost sight of him as he descended a small back staircase. Still Durward followed, though without exact consciousness of his own purpose in doing so. The staircase terminated by a door opening into the alley of a garden, in which he again beheld the Zingaro hastening down a pleached walk.

On two sides the garden was surrounded by the buildings of the castle—a huge old pile, partly castellated, and partly resembling an ecclesiastical building; on the other two sides the enclosure was a high embattled wall. Crossing the alleys of the garden to another part of the building, where a postern-door opened behind a large massive buttress, overgrown with ivy, Hayraddin looked back, and waved his hand in signal of an exulting farewell to his follower, who saw that in effect the

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postern-door was opened by Marthon, and that the vile Bohemian was admitted into the precincts, as he naturally concluded, of the apartment of the Countesses of Croye. Quentin bit his lips with indignation, and blamed himself severely that he had not made the ladies sensible of the full infamy of Hayraddin's character, and acquainted with his machinations against their safety. The arrogating manner in which the Bohemian had promised to back his suit, added to his anger and his disgust; and he felt as if even the hand of the Countess Isabelle would be profaned, were it possible to attain it by such patronage. "But it is all a deception," he said—"a turn of his base juggling artifice. He has procured access to these ladies upon some false pretence, and with some mischievous intention. It is well I have learned where they lodge. I will watch Marthon, and solicit an interview with them, were it but to place them on their guard. It is hard that I must use artifice and brook delay, when such as he have admittance openly and without scruple. They shall find, however, that though I am excluded from their presence, Isabelle's safety is still the chief subject of my vigilance.

While the young lover was thus meditating, an aged gentleman of the Bishop's household approached him from the same door by which he had himself entered the garden, and made him aware, though with the greatest civility of manner, that the garden was private, and reserved only for the use of the Bishop, and guests of the very highest distinction.

Quentin heard him repeat this information twice ere he put the proper construction upon it; and then starting as from a reverie, he bowed and hurried out of the garden, the official person following him all the way, and overwhelming him with formal apologies for the necessary discharge of his duty. Nay, so pertinacious was he in his attempts to remove the offence which he conceived Durward to have taken, that he offered to bestow his own company upon him, to contribute to his entertainment; until Quentin, internally cursing his formal foppery, found no better way of escape, than pretending a desire of visiting the neighbouring city, and setting off thither at such a round pace as speedily subdued all desire in the gentleman-usher to accompany him farther than the drawbridge. In a few minutes Quentin was within the walls of the city of Liege, then one of the richest in Flanders, and of course in the world.

Melancholy, even love-melancholy, is not so deeply seated,

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at least in minds of a manly and elastic character, as the soft enthusiasts who suffer under it are fond of believing. It yields to unexpected and striking impressions upon the senses, to change of place, to such scenes as create new trains of association, and to the influence of the busy hum of mankind. In a few minutes Quentin's attention was as much engrossed by the variety of objects presented in rapid succession by the busy streets of Liege, as if there had neither been a Countess Isabelle, nor a Bohemian, in the world.

The lofty houses,—the stately, though narrow and gloomy streets,—the splendid display of the richest goods and most gorgeous armour in the warehouses and shops around,—the walks crowded by busy citizens of every description, passing and repassing with faces of careful importance or eager bustle, —the huge wains, which transported to and fro the subjects of export and import, the former consisting of broad cloths and serge, arms of all kinds, nails and iron-work, while the latter comprehended every article of use or luxury, intended either for the consumption of an opulent city, or received in barter, and destined to be transported elsewhere,—all these objects combined to form an engrossing picture of wealth, bustle, and splendour, to which Quentin had been hitherto a stranger. He admired also the various streams and canals, drawn from and communicating with the Maes, which, traversing the city in various directions, offered to every quarter the commercial facilities of water-carriage, and he failed not to hear a mass in the venerable old Church of Saint Lambert, said to have been founded in the eighth century.

It was upon leaving this place of worship that Quentin began to observe, that he, who had been hitherto gazing on all around him with the eagerness of unrestrained curiosity, was himself the object of attention to several groups of substantial-looking burghers, who seemed assembled to look upon him as he left the church, and amongst whom arose a buzz and whisper, which spread from one party to another; while the number of gazers continued to augment rapidly, and the eyes of each who added to it were eagerly directed to Quentin, with a stare which expressed much interest and curiosity, mingled with a certain degree of respect.

At length he now formed the centre of a considerable crowd, which yet yielded before him while he continued to move for-

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ward; while those who followed or kept pace with him studiously avoided pressing on him, or impeding his motions. Yet his situation was too embarrassing to be long endured, without making some attempt to extricate himself, and to obtain some explanation.

Quentin looked around him, and fixing upon a jolly, stout-made, respectable man, whom, by his velvet cloak and gold chain, he concluded to be a burgher of eminence, and perhaps a magistrate, he asked him, "Whether he saw anything particular in his appearance, to attract public attention in a degree so unusual? or whether it was the ordinary custom of the people of Liege thus to throng around strangers who chanced to visit their city?"

"Surely not, good seignior," answered the burgher; "the Liegeois are neither so idly curious as to practise such a custom, nor is there anything in your dress or appearance, saving that which is most welcome to this city, and which our townsmen are both delighted to see, and desirous to honour."

"This sounds very polite, worthy sir," said Quentin; "but, by the Cross of Saint Andrew, I cannot even guess at your meaning."

"Your oath, sir," answered the merchant of Liege, "as well as your accent, convinces me that we are right in our conjecture."

"By my patron Saint Quentin!" said Durward, "I am farther off from your meaning than ever."

"There again now," rejoined the Liegeois, looking, as he spoke, most provokingly, yet most civilly, politic and intelligent. —"It is surely not for us to see that which you, worthy seignior, deem it proper to conceal. But why swear by Saint Quentin, if you would not have me construe your meaning?—We know the good Count of Saint Paul, who lies there at present, wishes well to our cause."

"On my life," said Quentin, "you are under some delusion. —I know nothing of Saint Paul."

"Nay, we question you not," said the burgher; "although, hark ye—I say, hark in your ear—my name is Pavillon."

"And what is my business with that, Seignior Pavillon?" said Quentin.

"Nay, nothing—only methinks it might satisfy you that I am trustworthy.—Here is my colleague Rouslaer, too."

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Rouslaer advanced, a corpulent dignitary, whose fair round belly, like a battering-ram, "did shake the press before him," and who, whispering caution to his neighbour, said in a tone of rebuke, "You forget, good colleague, the place is too open—the seignior will retire to your house or mine, and drink a glass of Rhenish and sugar, and then we shall hear more of our good friend and ally, whom we love with all our honest Flemish hearts."

"I have no news for any of you," said Quentin, impatiently; "I will drink no Rhenish; and I only desire of you, as men of account and respectability, to disperse this idle crowd, and allow a stranger to leave your town as quietly as he came into it."

"Nay, then, sir," said Rouslaer, "since you stand so much on your incognito, and with us, too, who are men of confidence, let me ask you roundly, wherefore wear you the badge of your company if you would remain unknown in Liege?"

"What badge, and what order?" said Quentin; "you look like reverend men and grave citizens, yet, on my soul, you are either mad yourselves, or desire to drive me so."

"Sapperment!" said the other burgher, "this youth would make Saint Lambert swear! Why, who wear bonnets with the Saint Andrew's cross and *fleur-de-lys*, save the Scottish Archers of King Louis's Guards?"

"And supposing I am an Archer of the Scottish Guard, why should you make a wonder of my wearing the badge of my company?" said Quentin impatiently.

"He has avowed it, he has avowed it!" said Rouslaer and Pavillon, turning to the assembled burghers in attitudes of congratulation, with waving arms, extended palms, and large round faces radiating with glee. "He hath avowed himself an Archer of Louis's Guard—of Louis, the guardian of the liberties of Liege!"

A general shout and cry now arose from the multitude, in which were mingled the various sounds of "Long live Louis of France! Long live the Scottish Guard! Long live the valiant Archer! Our liberties, our privileges, or death! No imposts! Long live the valiant Boar of Ardennes! Down with Charles of Burgundy! and confusion to Bourbon and his bishopric!"

Half-stunned by the noise, which began anew in one quarter so soon as it ceased in another, rising and falling like the billows of the sea, and augmented by thousands of voices which roared in chorus from distant streets and market-places, Quentin had

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yet time to form a conjecture concerning the meaning of the tumult, and a plan for regulating his own conduct.

He had forgotten that, after his skirmish with Orleans and Dunois, one of his comrades had, at Lord Crawford's command, replaced the morion, cloven by the sword of the latter, with one of the steel-lined bonnets, which formed a part of the proper and well-known equipment of the Scottish Guards. That an individual of this body, which was always kept very close to Louis's person, should have appeared in the streets of a city, whose civil discontents had been aggravated by the agents of that King, was naturally enough interpreted by the burghers of Liege into a determination on the part of Louis openly to assist their cause; and the apparition of an individual archer was magnified into a pledge of immediate and active support from Louis—nay, into an assurance that his auxiliary forces were actually entering the town at one or other, though no one could distinctly tell which, of the city-gates.

To remove a conviction so generally adopted, Quentin easily saw was impossible—nay, that any attempt to undeceive men so obstinately prepossessed in their belief, would be attended with personal risk, which, in this case, he saw little use of incurring. He therefore hastily resolved to temporise, and to get free the best way he could; and this resolution he formed while they were in the act of conducting him to the Stadthouse, where the notables of the town were fast assembling, in order to hear the tidings which he was presumed to have brought, and to regale him with a splendid banquet.

In spite of all his opposition, which was set down to modesty, he was on every side surrounded by the donors of popularity, the unsavoury tide of which now floated around him. His two burgomaster friends, who were *Schoppen*, or Syndics of the city, had made fast both his arms. Before him, Nikkel Blok, the chief of the butchers' incorporation, hastily summoned from his office in the shambles, brandished his death-doing axe, yet smeared with blood and brains, with a courage and grace which *brantwein* alone could inspire. Behind him came the tall, lean, raw-boned, very drunk, and very patriotic figure of Claus Hammerlain, president of the mystery of the workers in iron, and followed by at least a thousand unwashed artificers of his class. Weavers, nailers, ropemakers, artisans of every degree and calling, thronged forward to join the procession from every

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gloomy and narrow street. Escape seemed a desperate and impossible adventure.

In this dilemma, Quentin appealed to Rouslaer, who held one arm, and to Pavillon, who had secured the other, and who were conducting him forward at the head of the ovation, of which he had so unexpectedly become the principal object. He hastily acquainted them with his having thoughtlessly adopted the bonnet of the Scottish Guard, on an accident having occurred to the head-piece in which he had proposed to travel; he regretted that, owing to this circumstance, and the sharp wit with which the Liegeois drew the natural inference of his quality, and the purpose of his visit, these things had been publicly discovered; and he intimated, that, if just now conducted to the Stadthouse, he might unhappily feel himself under the necessity of communicating to the assembled notables certain matters, which he was directed by the King to reserve for the private ears of his excellent gossips, Meinheers Rouslaer and Pavillon of Liege.

This last hint operated like magic on the two citizens, who were the most distinguished leaders of the insurgent burghers, and were, like all demagogues of their kind, desirous to keep everything within their own management, so far as possible. They therefore hastily agreed that Quentin should leave the town for the time, and return by night to Liege, and converse with them privately in the house of Rouslaer, near the gate opposite to Schonwaldt. Quentin hesitated not to tell them, that he was at present residing in the Bishop's palace, under pretence of bearing despatches from the French Court, although his real errand was, as they had well conjectured, designed to the citizens of Liege; and this tortuous mode of conducting a communication, as well as the character and rank of the person to whom it was supposed to be intrusted, was so consonant to the character of Louis, as neither to excite doubt nor surprise.

Almost immediately after this *éclaircissement* was completed, the progress of the multitude brought them opposite to the door of Pavillon's house, in one of the principal streets, but which communicated from behind with the Maes, by means of a garden, as well as an extensive manufactory of tan-pits, and other conveniences for dressing hides; for the patriotic burgher was a felt-dresser, or currier.

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It was natural that Pavillon should desire to do the honours of his dwelling to the supposed envoy of Louis, and a halt before his house excited no surprise on the part of the multitude; who, on the contrary, greeted Meinheer Pavillon with a loud *vivat*, as he ushered in his distinguished guest. Quentin speedily laid aside his remarkable bonnet, for the cap of a feltmaker, and flung a cloak over his other apparel. Pavillon then furnished him with a passport to pass the gates of the city, and to return by night or day as should suit his convenience; and lastly, committed him to the charge of his daughter, a fair and smiling Flemish lass, with instructions how he was to be disposed of, while he himself hastened back to his colleague, to amuse their friends at the Stadthouse, with the best excuses which they could invent for the disappearance of King Louis's envoy. We cannot, as the footman says in the play, recollect the exact nature of the lie which the bell-wethers told the flock; but no task is so easy as that of imposing upon a multitude whose eager prejudices have more than half done the business, ere the impostor has spoken a word.

The worthy burgess was no sooner gone, than his plump daughter, Trudchen, with many a blush, and many a wreathed smile, which suited very prettily with lips like cherries, laughing blue eyes, and a skin transparently pure, escorted the handsome stranger through the pleached alleys of the Sieur Pavillon's garden, down to the water-side, and there saw him fairly embarked in a boat, which two stout Flemings, in their trunk-hose, fur caps, and many-buttoned jerkins, had got in readiness with as much haste as their low-country nature would permit.

As the pretty Trudchen spoke nothing but German, Quentin —no disparagement to his loyal affection to the Countess of Croye—could only express his thanks by a kiss on those same cherry lips, which was very gallantly bestowed, and accepted with all modest gratitude; for gallants with a form and face like our Scottish Archer, were not of every-day occurrence among the *bourgeoisie* of Liege.*

* The adventure of Quentin at Liege may be thought overstrained, yet it is extraordinary what slight circumstances will influence the public mind in a moment of doubt and uncertainty. Most readers must remember, that, when the Dutch were on the point of rising against the French yoke, their zeal for liberation received a strong impulse from the landing of a person in a British volunteer uniform, whose presence, though that of a private individual, was received as a guarantee of succours from England.

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While the boat was rowed up the sluggish waters of the Maes, and passed the defences of the town, Quentin had time enough to reflect what account he ought to give of his adventure in Liege, when he returned to the Bishop's palace of Schonwaldt; and disdaining alike to betray any person who had reposed confidence in him, although by misapprehension, or to conceal from the hospitable Prelate the mutinous state of his capital, he resolved to confine himself to so general an account as might put the Bishop upon his guard, while it should point out no individual to his vengeance.

He was landed from the boat, within half-a-mile of the castle, and rewarded his rowers with a guilder, to their great satisfaction. Yet, short as was the space which divided him from Schonwaldt, the castle-bell had tolled for dinner, and Quentin found, moreover, that he had approached the castle on a different side from that of the principal entrance, and that to go round would throw his arrival considerably later. He, therefore, made straight towards the side that was nearest to him, as he discerned that it presented an embattled wall, probably that of the little garden already noticed, with a postern opening upon the moat, and a skiff moored by the postern, which might serve, he thought, upon summons, to pass him over. As he approached, in hopes to make his entrance this way, the postern opened, a man came out, and, jumping into the boat, made his way to the farther side of the moat, and then, with a long pole, pushed the skiff back towards the place where he had embarked. As he came near, Quentin discerned that this person was the Bohemian, who, avoiding him, as was not difficult, held a different path towards Liege, and was presently out of his ken.

Here was new subject for meditation. Had this vagabond heathen been all this while with the Ladies of Croye, and for what purpose should they so far have graced him with their presence? Tormented with this thought, Durward became doubly determined to seek an explanation with them, for the purpose at once of laying bare the treachery of Hayraddin, and announcing to them the perilous state in which their protector, the Bishop, was placed, by the mutinous state of his town of Liege.

As Quentin thus resolved, he entered the castle by the principal gate, and found that part of the family who assembled for dinner in the great hall, including the Bishop's attendant clergy, officers of the household, and strangers below the rank

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of the very first nobility, were already placed at their meal. A seat at the upper end of the board had, however, been reserved beside the Bishop's domestic chaplain, who welcomed the stranger with the old college jest of *Sero venientibus ossa*, while he took care so to load his plate with dainties, as to take away all appearance of that tendency to reality, which, in Quentin's country, is said to render a joke either no joke, or at best an unpalatable one.*

In vindicating himself from the suspicion of ill breeding, Quentin briefly described the tumult which had been occasioned in the city by his being discovered to belong to the Scottish Archer Guard of Louis, and endeavoured to give a ludicrous turn to the narrative by saying, that he had been with difficulty extricated by a fat burgher of Liege and his pretty daughter.

But the company were too much interested in the story to taste the jest. All operations of the table were suspended while Quentin told his tale; and when he had ceased, there was a solemn pause, which was only broken by the Major-Domo saying in a low and melancholy tone, "I would to God that we saw those hundred lances of Burgundy!"

"Why should you think so deeply on it?" said Quentin—"You have many soldiers here, whose trade is arms; and your antagonists are only the rabble of a disorderly city, who will fly before the first flutter of a banner with men-at-arms arrayed beneath it."

"You do not know the men of Liege," said the Chaplain, "of whom it may be said, that, not even excepting those of Ghent, they are at once the fiercest and the most untameable in Europe. Twice has the Duke of Burgundy chastised them for their repeated revolts against their Bishop, and twice hath he suppressed them with much severity, abridged their privileges, taken away their banners, and established rights and claims to himself, which were not before competent over a free city of the Empire—Nay, the last time he defeated them with much slaughter near Saint Tron, where Liege lost nearly six thousand men, what with the sword, what with those drowned in the flight; and thereafter, to disable them from further mutiny, Duke Charles refused to enter at any of the gates which they had surrendered, but, beating to the ground forty cubits' breadth of their city wall, marched into Liege as a con-

* "A sooth boord (true joke) is no boord," says the Scot.

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queror, with visor closed, and lance in rest, at the head of his chivalry, by the breach which he had made. Nay, well were the Liegeois then assured, that, but for the intercession of his father, Duke Philip the Good, this Charles, then called Count of Charalois, would have given their town up to spoil. And yet, with all these fresh recollections, with their breaches unrepaired, and their arsenals scarcely supplied, the sight of an archer's bonnet is sufficient again to stir them to uproar. May God amend all! but I fear there will be bloody work between so fierce a population and so fiery a Sovereign; and I would my excellent and kind Master had a see of lesser dignity and more safety, for his mitre is lined with thorns instead of ermine. This much I say to you, Seignior Stranger, to make you aware, that, if your affairs detain you not at Schonwaldt, it is a place from which each man of sense should depart as speedily as possible. I apprehend that your ladies are of the same opinion; for one of the grooms who attended them on the route, has been sent back by them to the Court of France with letters, which, doubtless, are intended to announce their going in search of a safer asylum."

CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

THE BILLET.

Go to—thou art made, if thou desirest to be so—If not, let me see thee still the fellow of servants, and not fit to touch Fortune's fingers.
TWELFTH NIGHT.

WHEN the tables were drawn, the Chaplain, who seemed to have taken a sort of attachment to Quentin Durward's society, or who perhaps desired to extract from him farther information concerning the meeting of the morning, led him into a withdrawing apartment, the windows of which, on one side, projected into the garden; and as he saw his companion's eye gaze rather eagerly upon the spot, he proposed to Quentin to go down and take a view of the curious foreign shrubs with which the Bishop had enriched its parterres.

Quentin excused himself, as unwilling to intrude, and there-

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withal communicated the check which he had received in the morning. The Chaplain smiled, and said, "That there was indeed some ancient prohibition respecting the Bishop's private garden; but this," he added, with a smile, "was when our reverend father was a princely young prelate of not more than thirty years of age, and when many fair ladies frequented the Castle for ghostly consolation. Need there was," he said, with a downcast look, and a smile, half simple, and half intelligent, "that these ladies, pained in conscience, who were ever lodged in the apartments now occupied by the noble Canoness, should have some space for taking the air, secure from the intrusion of the profane. But of late years," he added, "this prohibition, although not formally removed, has fallen entirely out of observance, and remains but as the superstition which lingers in the brain of a superannuated gentleman-usher. If you please," he added, "we will presently descend, and try whether the place be haunted or no."

Nothing could have been more agreeable to Quentin than the prospect of a free entrance into the garden, through means of which, according to a chance which had hitherto attended his passion, he hoped to communicate with, or at least obtain sight of, the object of his affections, from some such turret or balcony-window, or similar "coign of vantage," as at the hostelry of the Fleur-de-Lys, near Plessis, or the Dauphin's Tower, within that Castle itself. Isabelle seemed still destined, wherever she made her abode, to be the Lady of the Turret.

When Durward descended with his new friend into the garden, the latter seemed a terrestrial philosopher, entirely busied with the things of the earth; while the eyes of Quentin, if they did not seek the heavens, like those of an astrologer, ranged, at least, all around the windows, balconies, and especially the turrets, which projected on every part from the inner front of the old building, in order to discover that which was to be his cynosure.

While thus employed, the young lover heard with total neglect, if indeed he heard at all, the enumeration of plants, herbs, and shrubs, which his reverend conductor pointed out to him; of which this was choice, because of prime use in medicine; and that more choice for yielding a rare flavour to pottage; and a third, choicest of all, because possessed of no merit but its extreme scarcity. Still it was necessary to preserve some sem-

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blance at least of attention; which the youth found so difficult, that he fairly wished at the devil the officious naturalist and the whole vegetable kingdom. He was relieved at length by the striking of a clock, which summoned the Chaplain to some official duty.

The reverend man made many unnecessary apologies for leaving his new friend, and concluded by giving him the agreeable assurance, that he might walk in the garden till supper, without much risk of being disturbed.

"It is," said he, "the place where I always study my own homilies, as being most sequestered from the resort of strangers. I am now about to deliver one of them in the chapel, if you please to favour me with your audience. I have been thought to have some gift.—But the glory be where it is due!"

Quentin excused himself for this evening under pretence of a severe headache, which the open air was likely to prove the best cure for; and at length the well-meaning priest left him to himself.

It may be well imagined, that in the curious inspection which he now made, at more leisure, of every window or aperture which looked into the garden, those did not escape which were in the immediate neighbourhood of the small door by which he had seen Marthon admit Hayraddin, as he pretended, to the apartment of the Countesses. But nothing stirred or showed itself, which could either confute or confirm the tale which the Bohemian had told, until it was becoming dusky; and Quentin began to be sensible, he scarce knew why, that his sauntering so long in the garden might be subject of displeasure or suspicion.

Just as he had resolved to depart, and was taking what he had destined for his last turn under the windows which had such attraction for him, he heard above nim a slight and cautious sound, like that of a cough, as intended to call his attention, and to avoid the observation of others. As he looked up in joyful surprise, a casement opened—a female hand was seen to drop a billet, which fell into a rosemary bush that grew at the foot of the wall. The precaution used in dropping this letter prescribed equal prudence and secrecy in reading it. The garden, surrounded, as we have said, upon two sides by the buildings of the palace, was commanded, of course, by the windows of many apartments; but there was a sort of grotto of rock-work, which the Chaplain had shown Durward with much complacency. To snatch up the

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billet, thrust it into his bosom, and hie to this place of secrecy, was the work of a single minute. He there opened the precious scroll, and blessed, at the same time, the memory of the monks of Aberbrothick, whose nurture had rendered him capable of deciphering its contents.

The first line contained the injunction, "Read this in secret," —and the contents were as follows:—"What your eyes have too boldly said, mine have perhaps too rashly understood. But unjust persecution makes its victims bold, and it were better to throw myself on the gratitude of one than to remain the object of pursuit to many. Fortune has her throne upon a rock; but brave men fear not to climb. If you dare do aught for one that hazards much, you need but pass into this garden at prime tomorrow, wearing in your cap a blue-and-white feather; but expect no farther communication. Your stars have, they say, destined you for greatness, and disposed you to gratitude.—Farewell—be faithful, prompt, and resolute, and doubt not thy fortune." Within this letter was enclosed a ring with a table-diamond, on which were cut, in form of a lozenge, the ancient arms of the House of Croye.

The first feeling of Quentin upon this occasion was unmingled ecstasy—a pride and joy which seemed to raise him to the stars —a determination to do or die, influenced by which he treated with scorn the thousand obstacles that placed themselves betwixt him and the goal of his wishes.

In this mood of rapture, and unable to endure any interruption which might withdraw his mind, were it but for a moment, from so ecstatic a subject of contemplation, Durward, retiring to the interior of the castle, hastily assigned his former pretext of a headache for not joining the household of the Bishop at the supper-meal, and lighting his lamp, betook himself to the chamber which had been assigned him, to read, and to read again and again, the precious billet, and to kiss a thousand times the no less precious ring.

But such high-wrought feelings could not remain long in the same ecstatic tone. A thought pressed upon him, though he repelled it as ungrateful—as even blasphemous—that the frankness of the confession implied less delicacy, on the part of her who made it, than was consistent with the high romantic feeling of adoration with which he had hitherto worshipped the Lady Isabelle. No sooner did this ungracious thought intrude itself,

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than he hastened to stifle it, as he would have stifled a hissing and hateful adder, that had intruded itself into his couch. Was it for him—him the Favoured—on whose account she had stooped from her sphere, to ascribe blame to her for the very act of condescension, without which he dared not have raised his eyes towards her? Did not her very dignity of birth and of condition reverse, in her case, the usual rules which impose silence on the lady until her lover shall have first spoken? To these arguments, which he boldly formed into syllogisms, and avowed to himself, his vanity might possibly suggest one which he cared not to embody even mentally with the same frankness—that the merit of the party beloved might perhaps warrant, on the part of the lady, some little departure from common rules; and after all, as in the case of Malvolio, there was example for it in chronicle. The squire of low degree, of whom he had just been reading, was, like himself, a gentleman void of land and living, and yet the generous Princess of Hungary bestowed on him, without scruple, more substantial marks of her affection than the billet he had just received—

> "Welcome," she said, "my swetie Squyre,
> My heartis roote, my soule's desire;
> I will give thee kisses three,
> And als five hundrid pounds in fee."

And, again, the same faithful history made the King of Hongrie himself avouch,

> "I have yknown many a page
> Come to be Prince by marriage."

So that, upon the whole, Quentin generously and magnanimously reconciled himself to a line of conduct on the Countess's part, by which he was likely to be so highly benefited.

But this scruple was succeeded by another doubt, harder of digestion. The traitor Hayraddin had been in the apartments of the ladies, for aught Quentin knew, for the space of four hours, and considering the hints which he had thrown out of possessing an influence of the most interesting kind over the fortunes of Quentin Durward, what should assure him that this train was not of his laying? and if so, was it not probable that such a dissembling villain had set it on foot to conceal some new plan of treachery—perhaps to seduce Isabelle out of the protection of the worthy Bishop? This was a matter to be closely looked into,

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for Quentin felt a repugnance to this individual proportioned to the unabashed impudence with which he had avowed his profligacy, and could not bring himself to hope that anything in which he was concerned could ever come to an honourable or happy conclusion.

These various thoughts rolled over Quentin's mind like misty clouds, to dash and obscure the fair landscape which his fancy had at first drawn, and his couch was that night a sleepless one. At the hour of prime—ay, and an hour before it, was he in the castle-garden, where no one now opposed either his entrance or his abode, with a feather of the assigned colour, as distinguished as he could by any means procure in such haste. No notice was taken of his appearance for nearly two hours; at length he heard a few notes of the lute, and presently the lattice opened right above the little postern-door at which Marthon had admitted Hayraddin, and Isabelle, in maidenly beauty, appeared at the opening, greeted him half-kindly, half-shyly, coloured extremely at the deep and significant reverence with which he returned her courtesy—shut the casement, and disappeared.

Daylight and champaign could discover no more! The authenticity of the billet was ascertained—it only remained what was to follow; and of this the fair writer had given him no hint. But no immediate danger impended—the Countess was in a strong castle, under the protection of a prince, at once respectable for his secular, and venerable for his ecclesiastical authority. There was neither immediate room nor occasion for the exulting Squire interfering in the adventure; and it was sufficient if he kept himself prompt to execute her commands whensoever they should be communicated to him. But Fate purposed to call him into action sooner than he was aware of.

It was the fourth night after his arrival at Schonwaldt, when Quentin had taken measures for sending back on the morrow, to the Court of Louis, the remaining groom who had accompanied him on his journey, with letters from himself to his uncle and Lord Crawford, renouncing the service of France, for which the treachery to which he had been exposed by the private instructions of Hayraddin gave him an excuse, both in honour and prudence; and he betook himself to his bed with all the rosy-coloured ideas around him which flutter about the couch of a youth when he loves dearly, and thinks his love is as sincerely repaid.

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But Quentin's dreams, which at first partook of the nature of those happy influences under which he had fallen asleep, began by degrees to assume a more terrific character.

He walked with the Countess Isabelle beside a smooth and inland lake, such as formed the principal characteristic of his native glen; and he spoke to her of his love, without any consciousness of the impediments which lay between them. She blushed and smiled when she listened—even as he might have expected from the tenor of the letter, which, sleeping or waking, lay nearest to his heart. But the scene suddenly changed from summer to winter—from calm to tempest; the winds and the waves rose with such a contest of surge and whirlwind, as if the demons of the water and of the air had been contending for their roaring empires in rival strife. The rising waters seemed to cut off their advance and their retreat—the increasing tempest, which dashed them against each other, seemed to render their remaining on the spot impossible; and the tumultuous sensations produced by the apparent danger awoke the dreamer.

He awoke; but although the circumstances of the vision had disappeared, and given place to reality, the noise, which had probably suggested them, still continued to sound in his ears.

Quentin's first impulse was to sit erect in bed and listen with astonishment to sounds, which, if they had announced a tempest, might have shamed the wildest that ever burst down from the Grampians; and again in a minute he became sensible, that the tumult was not excited by the fury of the elements, but by the wrath of men.

He sprung from bed, and looked from the window of his apartment; but it opened into the garden, and on that side all was quiet, though the opening of the casement made him still more sensible, from the shouts which reached his ears, that the outside of the castle was beleaguered and assaulted, and that by a numerous and determined enemy. Hastily collecting his dress and arms, and putting them on with such celerity as darkness and surprise permitted, his attention was solicited by a knocking at the door of his chamber. As Quentin did not immediately answer, the door, which was a slight one, was forced open from without, and the intruder, announced by his peculiar dialect to be the Bohemian, Hayraddin Maugrabin, entered the apartment. A phial, which he held in his hand, touched by a match, pro-

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duced a dark flash of ruddy fire, by means of which he kindled a lamp, which he took from his bosom.

"The horoscope of your destinies," he said energetically to Durward, without any farther greeting, "now turns upon the determination of a minute."

"Caitiff!" said Quentin, in reply, "there is treachery around us; and where there is treachery, thou *must* have a share in it."

"You are mad," answered Maugrabin—"I never betrayed any one but to gain by it—and wherefore should I betray you, by whose safety I can take more advantage than by your destruction? Hearken for a moment, if it be possible for you, to one note of reason, ere it is sounded into your ear by the death-shot of ruin. The Liegeois are up—William de la Marck with his band leads them—Were there means of resistance, their numbers, and his fury, would overcome them; but there are next to none. If you would save the Countess and your own hopes, follow me, in the name of her who sent you a table diamond, with three leopards engraved on it!"

"Lead the way," said Quentin, hastily—"In that name I dare every danger!"

"As I shall manage it," said the Bohemian, "there is no danger, if you can but withhold your hand from strife which does not concern you; for, after all, what is it to you whether the Bishop, as they call him, slaughters his flock, or the flock slaughters the shepherd?—Ha! ha! ha! Follow me, but with caution and patience; subdue your own courage, and confide in my prudence—and my debt of thankfulness is paid, and you have a Countess for your spouse—Follow me."

"I follow," said Quentin, drawing his sword; "but the moment in which I detect the least sign of treachery, thy head and body are three yards separate!"

Without more conversation, the Bohemian, seeing that Quentin was now fully armed and ready, ran down the stairs before him, and winded hastily through various side-passages, until they gained the little garden. Scarce a light was to be seen on that side, scarce any bustle was to be heard; but no sooner had Quentin entered the open space, than the noise on the opposite side of the castle became ten times more stunningly audible, and he could hear the various war-cries of "Liege! Liege! Sanglier! Sanglier!" shouted by the assailants, while the feebler cry of "Our Lady for the Prince Bishop!" was raised in a faint and

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faltering tone, by those of the prelate's soldiers who had hastened, though surprised and at disadvantage, to the defence of the walls.

But the interest of the fight, notwithstanding the martial character of Quentin Durward, was indifferent to him, in comparison of the fate of Isabelle of Croye, which, he had reason to fear, would be a dreadful one, unless rescued from the power of the dissolute and cruel freebooter, who was now, as it seemed, bursting the gates of the castle. He reconciled himself to the aid of the Bohemian, as men in a desperate illness refuse not the remedy prescribed by quacks and mountebanks, and followed across the garden, with the intention of being guided by him until he should discover symptoms of treachery, and then piercing him through the heart, or striking his head from his body. Hayraddin seemed himself conscious that his safety turned on a feather-weight, for he forbore, from the moment they entered the open air, all his wonted jibes and quirks, and seemed to have made a vow to act at once with modesty, courage, and activity.

At the opposite door, which led to the ladies' apartments, upon a low signal made by Hayraddin, appeared two women, muffled in the black silk veils which were then, as now, worn by the women in the Netherlands. Quentin offered his arm to one of them, who clung to it with trembling eagerness, and indeed hung upon him so much, that had her weight been greater, she must have much impeded their retreat. The Bohemian, who conducted the other female, took the road straight for the postern which opened upon the moat, through the garden wall, close to which the little skiff was drawn up, by means of which Quentin had formerly observed Hayraddin himself retreating from the castle.

As they crossed, the shouts of storm and successful violence seemed to announce that the castle was in the act of being taken; and so dismal was the sound in Quentin's ears, that he could not help swearing aloud, "But that my blood is irretrievably devoted to the fulfilment of my present duty, I would back to the wall, take faithful part with the hospitable Bishop, and silence some of those knaves whose throats are full of mutiny and robbery!"

The lady, whose arm was still folded in his, pressed it lightly as he spoke, as if to make him understand that there was a

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nearer claim on his chivalry than the defence of Schonwaldt; while the Bohemian exclaimed, loud enough to be heard, "Now, that I call right Christian frenzy, which would turn back to fight, when love and fortune both demand that we should fly. —On, on—with all the haste you can make—Horses wait us in yonder thicket of willows."

"There are but two horses," said Quentin, who saw them in the moonlight.

"All that I could procure without exciting suspicion—and enough, besides," replied the Bohemian. "You two must ride for Tongres ere the way becomes unsafe—Marthon will abide with the women of our horde, with whom she is an old acquaintance. Know she is a daughter of our tribe, and only dwelt among you to serve our purpose as occasion should fall."

"Marthon!" exclaimed the Countess, looking at the veiled female, with a shriek of surprise; "is not this my kinswoman?"

"Only Marthon," said Hayraddin—"Excuse me that little piece of deceit. I dared not carry off *both* the Ladies of Croye from the Wild Boar of Ardennes."

"Wretch!" said Quentin, emphatically—"but it is not—shall not be too late—I will back to rescue the Lady Hameline."

"Hameline," whispered the lady, in a disturbed voice, "hangs on thy arm, to thank thee for her rescue."

"Ha! what!—How is this?" said Quentin, extricating himself from her hold, and with less gentleness than he would at any other time have used towards a female of any rank—"Is the Lady Isabelle then left behind?—Farewell—farewell."

As he turned to hasten back to the castle, Hayraddin laid hold of him—"Nay, hear you—hear you—you run upon your death! What the foul fiend did you wear the colours of the old one for?—I will never trust blue and white silk again. But she has almost as large a dower—has jewels and gold—hath pretensions, too, upon the earldom."

While he spoke thus, panting on in broken sentences, the Bohemian struggled to detain Quentin, who at length laid his hand on his dagger, in order to extricate himself.

"Nay, if that be the case," said Hayraddin, unloosing his hold, "go—and the devil, if there be one, go along with you!" —And, soon as freed from his hold, the Scot shot back to the castle with the speed of the wind.

Hayraddin then turned round to the Countess Hameline,

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who had sunk down on the ground, between shame, fear, and disappointment.

"Here has been a mistake," he said; "up, lady, and come with me—I will provide you, ere morning comes, a gallanter husband than this smock-faced boy; and if one will not serve, you shall have twenty."

The Lady Hameline was as violent in her passions as she was vain and weak in her understanding. Like many other persons, she went tolerably well through the ordinary duties of life; but in a crisis like the present, she was entirely incapable of doing aught, save pouring forth unavailing lamentations, and accusing Hayraddin of being a thief, a base slave, an impostor, a murderer.

"Call me Zingaro," returned he, composedly, "and you have said all at once."

"Monster! you said the stars had decreed our union, and caused me to write—Oh, wretch that I was!" exclaimed the unhappy lady.

"And so they *had* decreed your union," said Hayraddin, "had both parties been willing—but think you the blessed constellations can make any one wed against his will?—I was led into error with your accursed Christian gallantries, and fopperies of ribbons and favours—and the youth prefers veal to beef, I think—that's all.—Up and follow me; and take notice, I endure neither weeping nor swooning."

"I will not stir a foot," said the Countess, obstinately.

"By the bright welkin, but you shall, though!" exclaimed Hayraddin. "I swear to you, by all that ever fools believed in, that you have to do with one, who would care little to strip you naked, bind you to a tree, and leave you to your fortune!"

"Nay," said Marthon, interfering, "by your favour she shall not be misused. I wear a knife as well as you, and can use it—She is a kind woman, though a fool.—And you, madam, rise up and follow us—Here has been a mistake; but it is something to have saved life and limb. There are many in yonder castle would give all the wealth in the world to stand where we do now."

As Marthon spoke, a clamour, in which the shouts of victory were mingled with screams of terror and despair, was wafted to them from the Castle of Schonwaldt.

"Hear that, lady!" said Hayraddin, "and be thankful you

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are not adding your treble pipe to yonder concert. Believe me, I will care for you honestly, and the stars shall keep their words, and find you a good husband."

Like some wild animal, exhausted and subdued by terror and fatigue, the Countess Hameline yielded herself up to the conduct of her guides, and suffered herself to be passively led whichever way they would. Nay, such was the confusion of her spirits and the exhaustion of her strength, that the worthy couple, who half bore, half led her, carried on their discourse in her presence without her even understanding it.

"I ever thought your plan was folly," said Marthon. "Could you have brought the *young* people together, indeed, we might have had a hold on their gratitude, and a footing in their castle. But what chance of so handsome a youth wedding this old fool?"

"Rizpah," said Hayraddin, "you have borne the name of a Christian, and dwelt in the tents of those besotted people, till thou hast become a partaker in their follies. How could I dream that he would have made scruples about a few years, youth or age, when the advantages of the match were so evident? And thou knowest, there would have been no moving yonder coy wench to be so frank as this coming Countess here, who hangs on our arms as dead a weight as a wool-pack. I loved the lad too, and would have done him a kindness: to wed him to this old woman, was to make his fortune: to unite him to Isabelle, were to have brought on him De la Marck, Burgundy, France,—every one that challenges an interest in disposing of her hand. And this silly woman's wealth being chiefly in gold and jewels, we should have had our share. But the bow-string has burst, and the arrow failed. Away with her—we will bring her to William with the Beard. By the time he has gorged himself with wassail, as is his wont, he will not know an old Countess from a young one. Away, Rizpah—bear a gallant heart. The bright Aldeboran still influences the destinies of the Children of the Desert!"

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST.

THE SACK.

The gates of mercy shall be all shut up,
And the flesh'd soldier, rough and hard of heart,
In liberty of bloody hand shall range,
With conscience wide as hell.

HENRY V.

THE surprised and affrighted garrison of the Castle of Schonwaldt had, nevertheless, for some time, made good the defence of the place against the assailants; but the immense crowds which, issuing from the city of Liege, thronged to the assault like bees, distracted their attention, and abated their courage.

There was also disaffection at least, if not treachery, among the defenders; for some called out to surrender, and others, deserting their posts, tried to escape from the castle. Many threw themselves from the walls into the moat, and such as escaped drowning, flung aside their distinguishing badges, and saved themselves by mingling among the motley crowd of assailants. Some few, indeed, from attachment to the Bishop's person, drew around him, and continued to defend the great keep, to which he had fled; and others, doubtful of receiving quarter, or from an impulse of desperate courage, held out other detached bulwarks and towers of the extensive building. But the assailants had got possession of the courts and lower parts of the edifice, and were busy pursuing the vanquished, and searching for spoil, while one individual, as if he sought for that death from which all others were flying, endeavoured to force his way into the scene of tumult and horror, under apprehensions still more horrible to his imagination, than the realities around were to his sight and senses. Whoever had seen Quentin Durward that fatal night, not knowing the meaning of his conduct, had accounted him a raging madman; whoever had appreciated his motives, had ranked him nothing beneath a hero of romance.

Approaching Schonwaldt on the same side from which he had left it, the youth met several fugitives making for the wood, who naturally avoided him as an enemy, because he

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came in an opposite direction from that which they had adopted. When he came nearer, he could hear, and partly see, men dropping from the garden-wall into the castle fosse, and others who seemed precipitated from the battlements by the assailants. His courage was not staggered, even for an instant. There was not time to look for the boat, even had it been practicable to use it, and it was in vain to approach the postern of the garden, which was crowded with fugitives, who ever and anon, as they were thrust through it by the pressure behind, fell into the moat which they had no means of crossing.

Avoiding that point, Quentin threw himself into the moat, near what was called the little gate of the castle, and where there was a drawbridge, which was still elevated. He avoided with difficulty the fatal grasp of more than one sinking wretch, and, swimming to the drawbridge, caught hold of one of the chains which was hanging down, and, by a great exertion of strength and activity, swayed himself out of the water, and attained the platform from which the bridge was suspended. As with hands and knees he struggled to make good his footing, a lanzknecht, with his bloody sword in his hand, made towards him, and raised his weapon for a blow, which must have been fatal.

"How now, fellow!" said Quentin, in a tone of authority—"Is that the way in which you assist a comrade?—Give me your hand."

The soldier, in silence, and not without hesitation, reached him his arm, and helped him upon the platform, when, without allowing him time for reflection, the Scot continued in the same tone of command—"To the western tower, if you would be rich—the Priest's treasury is in the western tower."

The words were echoed on every hand: "To the western tower—the treasure is in the western tower!" And the stragglers who were within hearing of the cry, took, like a herd of raging wolves, the direction opposite to that which Quentin, come life, come death, was determined to pursue.

Bearing himself as if he were one, not of the conquered, but of the victors, he made a way into the garden, and pushed across it, with less interruption than he could have expected; for the cry of "To the western tower!" had carried off one body of the assailants, and another was summoned together, by war-cry and trumpet-sound, to assist in repelling a desperate sally,

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attempted by the defenders of the Keep, who had hoped to cut their way out of the Castle, bearing the Bishop along with them. Quentin, therefore, crossed the garden with an eager step and throbbing heart, commending himself to those heavenly powers which had protected him through the numberless perils of his life, and bold in his determination to succeed, or leave his life in this desperate undertaking. Ere he reached the garden, three men rushed on him with levelled lances, crying, "Liege, Liege!"

Putting himself in defence, but without striking, he replied, "France, France, friend to Liege!"

"Vivat France!" cried the burghers of Liege, and passed on. The same signal proved a talisman to avert the weapons of four or five of La Marck's followers, whom he found straggling in the garden, and who set upon him, crying, "Sanglier!"

In a word, Quentin began to hope, that his character as an emissary of King Louis, the private instigator of the insurgents of Liege, and the secret supporter of William de la Marck, might possibly bear him through the horrors of the night.

On reaching the turret, he shuddered when he found the little side-door, through which Marthon and the Countess Hameline had shortly before joined him, was now blockaded with more than one dead body.

Two of them he dragged hastily aside, and was stepping over the third body, in order to enter the portal, when the supposed dead man laid hand on his cloak, and entreated him to stay and assist him to rise. Quentin was about to use rougher methods than struggling to rid himself of this untimely obstruction, when the fallen man continued to exclaim, "I am stifled here, in mine own armour!—I am the Syndic Pavillon of Liege! If you are for us, I will enrich you—if you are for the other side, I will protect you; but do not—do not leave me to die the death of a smothered pig!"

In the midst of this scene of blood and confusion, the presence of mind of Quentin suggested to him, that this dignitary might have the means of protecting their retreat. He raised him on his feet, and asked him if he was wounded.

"Not wounded—at least I think not," answered the burgher; "but much out of wind."

"Sit down then on this stone, and recover your breath," said Quentin; "I will return instantly."

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"For whom are you?" said the burgher, still detaining him.

"For France—for France," answered Quentin, studying to get away.

"What! my lively young Archer?" said the worthy Syndic. "Nay, if it has been my fate to find a friend in this fearful night, I will not quit him, I promise you. Go where you will, I follow; and, could I get some of the tight lads of our guildry together, I might be able to help you in turn; but they are all squandered abroad like so many peas.—Oh, it is a fearful night!"

During this time he was dragging himself on after Quentin, who, aware of the importance of securing the countenance of a person of such influence, slackened his pace to assist him, although cursing in his heart the encumbrance that retarded his pace.

At the top of the stair was an anteroom, with boxes and trunks, which bore marks of having been rifled, as some of the contents lay on the floor. A lamp, dying in the chimney, shed a feeble beam on a dead or senseless man, who lay across the hearth.

Bounding from Pavillon, like a greyhound from his keeper's leash, and with an effort which almost overthrew him, Quentin sprung through a second and a third room, the last of which seemed to be the bedroom of the Ladies of Croye. No living mortal was to be seen in either of them. He called upon the Lady Isabelle's name, at first gently, then more loudly, and then with an accent of despairing emphasis; but no answer was returned. He wrung his hands, tore his hair, and stamped on the earth with desperation. At length, a feeble glimmer of light, which shone through a crevice in the wainscoting of a dark nook in the bedroom, announced some recess or concealment behind the arras. Quentin hasted to examine it. He found there was indeed a concealed door, but it resisted his hurried efforts to open it. Heedless of the personal injury he might sustain, he rushed at the door with his whole force and weight of his body; and such was the impetus of an effort made betwixt hope and despair, that it would have burst much stronger fastenings.

He thus forced his way, almost headlong, into a small oratory, where a female figure, which had been kneeling in agonising supplication before the holy image, now sunk at

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He hastily raised her from the ground, and, joy of joys! it was she whom he sought to save.—PAGE 273.

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length on the floor, under the new terrors implied in this approaching tumult. He hastily raised her from the ground, and, joy of joys! it was she whom he sought to save—the Countess Isabelle. He pressed her to his bosom—he conjured her to awake—entreated her to be of good cheer—for that she was now under the protection of one who had heart and hand enough to defend her against armies.

"Durward!" she said, as she at length collected herself, "is it indeed you?—then there is some hope left. I thought all living and mortal friends had left me to my fate—Do not again abandon me!"

"Never—never!" said Durward. "Whatever shall happen—whatever danger shall approach, may I forfeit the benefits purchased by yonder blessed sign, if I be not the sharer of your fate until it is again a happy one!"

"Very pathetic and touching, truly," said a rough, broken, asthmatic voice behind—"A love affair, I see; and, from my soul, I pity the tender creature, as if she were my own Trudchen."

"You must do more than pity us," said Quentin, turning towards the speaker; "you must assist in protecting us, Meinheer Pavillon. Be assured this lady was put under my especial charge by your ally the King of France; and, if you aid me not to shelter her from every species of offence and violence, your city will lose the favour of Louis of Valois. Above all, she must be guarded from the hands of William de la Marck."

"That will be difficult," said Pavillon, "for these schelms of lanzknechts are very devils at rummaging out the wenches; but I'll do my best—We will to the other apartment, and there I will consider—It is but a narrow stair, and you can keep the door with a pike, while I look from the window, and get together some of my brisk boys of the curriers' guildry of Liege, that are as true as the knives they wear in their girdles.—But first undo me these clasps—for I have not worn this corselet since the battle of Saint Tron;* and I am three stone heavier since that time, if there be truth in Dutch beam and scale."

The undoing of the iron enclosure gave great relief to the

* Fought by the insurgents of Liege against the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold, when Count of Charalois, in which the people of Liege were defeated with great slaughter.

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honest man, who, in putting it on, had more considered his zeal to the cause of Liege, than his capacity of bearing arms. It afterwards turned out, that being, as it were, borne forward involuntarily, and hoisted over the walls by his company as they thronged to the assault, the magistrate had been carried here and there, as the tide of attack and defence flowed or ebbed, without the power, latterly, of even uttering a word; until, as the sea casts a log of driftwood ashore in the first creek, he had been ultimately thrown down in the entrance to the Ladies of Croye's apartments, where the encumbrance of his own armour, with the superincumbent weight of two men slain in the entrance, and who fell above him, might have fixed him down long enough, had he not been relieved by Durward.

The same warmth of temper which rendered Hermann Pavillon a hotheaded and intemperate zealot in politics, had the more desirable consequence of making him, in private, a good-tempered, kind-hearted man, who, if sometimes a little misled by vanity, was always well-meaning and benevolent. He told Quentin to have an especial care of the poor pretty *yung frou;* and, after this unnecessary exhortation, began to halloo from the window, "Liege, Liege, for the gallant skinners' guild of curriers!"

One or two of his immediate followers collected at the summons, and at the peculiar whistle with which it was accompanied (each of the crafts having such a signal among themselves), and, more joining them, established a guard under the window from which their leader was bawling, and before the postern-door.

Matters seemed now settling into some sort of tranquillity. All opposition had ceased, and the leaders of the different classes of assailants were taking measures to prevent indiscriminate plunder. The great bell was tolled, a summons to a military council, and its iron tongue communicating to Liege the triumphant possession of Schonwaldt by the insurgents, was answered by all the bells in that city; whose distant and clamorous voices seemed to cry, Hail to the victors! It would have been natural, that Meinheer Pavillon should now have sallied from his fastness; but either in reverent care of those whom he had taken under his protection, or perhaps for the better assurance of his own safety, he contented himself with

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despatching messenger on messenger, to command his lieutenant, Peterkin Geislaer, to attend him directly.

Peterkin came, at length, to his great relief, as being the person upon whom, on all pressing occasions, whether of war, politics, or commerce, Pavillon was most accustomed to repose confidence. He was a stout, squat figure, with a square face, and broad black eyebrows, that announced him to be opinionative and disputatious,—an advice-giving countenance, so to speak. He was endued with a buff jerkin, wore a broad belt, and cutlass by his side, and carried a halberd in his hand.

"Peterkin, my dear lieutenant," said his commander, "this has been a glorious day—night I should say—I trust thou art pleased for once?"

"I am well enough pleased that you are so," said the doughty lieutenant; "though I should not have thought of your celebrating the victory, if you call it one, up in this garret by yourself, when you are wanted in council."

"But *am* I wanted there?" said the Syndic.

"Ay, marry are you, to stand up for the rights of Liege, that are in more danger than ever," answered the lieutenant.

"Pshaw, Peterkin," answered his principal, "thou art ever such a frampold grumbler"——

"Grumbler? not I," said Peterkin; "what pleases other people will always please me. Only I wish we have not got King Stork, instead of King Log, like the fabliau that the Clerk of Saint Lambert's used to read us out of Meister's Æsop's book."

"I cannot guess your meaning, Peterkin," said the Syndic.

"Why then, I tell you, Master Pavillon, that this Boar, or Bear, is like to make his own den of Schonwaldt, and 'tis probable to turn out as bad a neighbour to our town as ever was the old Bishop, and worse. Here has he taken the whole conquest in his own hand, and is only doubting whether he should be called Prince or Bishop;—and it is a shame to see how they have mishandled the old man among them."

"I will not permit it, Peterkin," said Pavillon, bustling up; "I disliked the mitre, but not the head that wore it. We are ten to one in the field, Peterkin, and will not permit these courses."

"Ay, ten to one in the field, but only man to man in the castle; besides that Nikkel Blok the butcher and all the rabble

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of the suburbs, take part with William de la Marck, partly for *saus* and *braus* (for he has broached all the ale-tubs and wine-casks), and partly for old envy towards us, who are the craftsmen, and have privileges."

"Peter," said Pavillon, "we will go presently to the city. I will stay no longer in Schonwaldt."

"But the bridges of this castle are up, master," said Geislaer —"the gates locked, and guarded by these lanzknechts; and, if we were to try to force our way, these fellows, whose every-day business is war, might make wild work of us, that only fight of a holiday."

"But why has he secured the gates?" said the alarmed burgher; "or what business hath he to make honest men prisoners?"

"I cannot tell—not I," said Peter. "Some noise there is about the Ladies of Croye, who have escaped during the storm of the castle. That first put the Man with the Beard beside himself with anger, and now he's beside himself with drink also."

The Burgomaster cast a disconsolate look towards Quentin, and seemed at a loss what to resolve upon. Durward, who had not lost a word of the conversation, which alarmed him very much, saw nevertheless that their only safety depended on his preserving his own presence of mind, and sustaining the courage of Pavillon. He struck boldly into the conversation, as one who had a right to have a voice in the deliberation.—"I am ashamed," he said, "Meinheer Pavillon, to observe you hesitate what to do on this occasion. Go boldly to William de la Marck, and demand free leave to quit the castle, you, your lieutenant, your squire, and your daughter. He can have no pretence for keeping you prisoner."

"For me and my lieutenant—that is myself and Peter?—good—but who is my squire?"

"I am, for the present," replied the undaunted Scot.

"You!" said the embarrassed burgess; "but are you not the envoy of King Louis of France?"

"True, but my message is to the magistrates of Liege—and only in Liege will I deliver it.—Were I to acknowledge my quality before William de la Marck, must I not enter into negotiations with him? ay, and it is like, be detained by him. You must get me secretly out of the castle in the capacity of your squire."

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"Good—my squire;—but you spoke of my daughter—my daughter is, I trust, safe in my house in Liege—where I wish her father was, with all my heart and soul."

"This lady," said Durward, "will call you father while we are in this place."

"And for my whole life afterwards," said the Countess, throwing herself at the citizen's feet, and clasping his knees.—"Never shall the day pass in which I will not honour you, love you, and pray for you as a daughter for a father, if you will but aid me in this fearful strait—Oh, be not hard-hearted! think your own daughter may kneel to a stranger, to ask him for life and honour—think of this, and give *me* the protection you would wish *her* to receive!"

"In troth," said the good citizen, much moved with her pathetic appeal—"I think, Peter, that this pretty maiden hath a touch of our Trudchen's sweet look,—I thought so from the first; and that this brisk youth here, who is so ready with his advice, is somewhat like Trudchen's bachelor—I wager a groat, Peter, that this is a true-love matter, and it is a sin not to farther it."

"It were shame and sin both," said Peter, a good-natured Fleming, notwithstanding all his self-conceit; and as he spoke he wiped his eyes with the sleeve of his jerkin.

"She *shall* be my daughter, then," said Pavillon, "well wrapped up in her black silk veil; and if there are not enough of true-hearted skinners to protect her, being the daughter of their Syndic, it were pity they should ever tug leather more.—But hark ye,—questions must be answered—How if I am asked what should my daughter make here at such an onslaught?"

"What should half the women in Liege make here when they followed us to the Castle?" said Peter; "they had no other reason, sure, but that it was just the place in the world that they should *not* have come to.—Our *yung frou* Trudchen has come a little farther than the rest—that is all."

"Admirably spoken," said Quentin; "only be bold, and take this gentleman's good counsel, noble Meinheer Pavillon, and, at no trouble to yourself, you will do the most worthy action since the days of Charlemagne.—Here, sweet lady, wrap yourself close in this veil" (for many articles of female apparel lay scattered about the apartment),—"be but confident, and a

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few minutes will place you in freedom and safety.—Noble sir," he added, addressing Pavillon, "set forward."

"Hold—hold—hold a minute," said Pavillon, "my mind misgives me!—This De la Marck is a fury; a perfect boar in his nature as in his name; what if the young lady be one of those of Croye?—and what if he discover her, and be addicted to wrath?"

"And if I were one of those unfortunate women," said Isabelle, again attempting to throw herself at his feet, "could you for that reject me in this moment of despair? Oh, that I had been indeed your daughter, or the daughter of the poorest burgher!"

"Not so poor—not so poor neither, young lady—we pay as we go," said the citizen.

"Forgive me, noble sir," again began the unfortunate maiden.

"Not noble, nor sir, neither," said the Syndic; "a plain burgher of Liege, that pays bills of exchange in ready guilders. —But that is nothing to the purpose.—Well, say you *be* a countess, I will protect you nevertheless."

"You are bound to protect her, were she a duchess," said Peter, "having once passed your word."

"Right, Peter, very right," said the Syndic; "it is our Low Dutch fashion, *Ein Wort, ein Mann;* and now let us to this gear. We must take leave of this William de la Marck; and yet I know not, my mind misgives me when I think of him; and were it a ceremony which could be waved, I have no stomach to go through it."

"Were you not better, since you have a force together, make for the gate and force the guard?" said Quentin.

But with united voice, Pavillon and his adviser exclaimed against the propriety of such an attack upon their ally's soldiers, with some hints concerning its rashness, which satisfied Quentin that it was not a risk to be hazarded with such associates. They resolved, therefore, to repair boldly to the great hall of the castle, where, as they understood, the Wild Boar of Ardennes held his feast, and demand free egress for the Syndic of Liege and his company, a request too reasonable, as it seemed, to be denied. Still the good Burgomaster groaned when he looked on his companions, and exclaimed to his faithful Peter—"See what it is to have too bold and too tender a heart! Alas!

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Perkin, how much have courage and humanity cost me! and how much may I yet have to pay for my virtues, before Heaven makes us free of this damned Castle of Schonwaldt!"

As they crossed the courts still strewed with the dying and dead, Quentin, while he supported Isabelle through the scene of horrors, whispered to her courage and comfort, and reminded her that her safety depended entirely on her firmness and presence of mind.

"Not on mine—not on mine," she said, "but on yours—on yours only.—Oh, if I but escape this fearful night, never shall I forget him who saved me! One favour more only, let me implore at your hand, and I conjure you to grant it, by your mother's fame and your father's honour!"

"What is it you can ask that I could refuse?" said Quentin, in a whisper.

"Plunge your dagger in my heart," said she, "rather than leave me captive in the hands of these monsters."

Quentin's only answer was a pressure of the young Countess's hand, which seemed as if, but for terror, it would have returned the caress. And, leaning on her youthful protector, she entered the fearful hall, preceded by Pavillon and his lieutenant, and followed by a dozen of the Kurschenschaft, or skinner's trade, who attended, as a guard of honour, on the Syndic.

As they approached the hall, the yells of acclamation, and bursts of wild laughter, which proceeded from it, seemed rather to announce the revel of festive demons, rejoicing after some accomplished triumph over the human race, than of mortal beings, who had succeeded in a bold design. An emphatic tone of mind, which despair alone could have inspired, supported the assumed courage of the Countess Isabelle; undaunted spirits, which rose with the extremity, maintained that of Durward; while Pavillon and his lieutenant made a virtue of necessity, and faced their fate like bears bound to a stake, which must necessarily stand the dangers of the course.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND.

THE REVELLERS.

Cade.—Where's Dick, the butcher of Ashford?
Dick.—Here, sir.
Cade.—They fell before thee like sheep and oxen; and thou behavedst thyself as if thou hadst been in thine own slaughter-house.

SECOND PART OF KING HENRY VI.

THERE could hardly exist a more strange and horrible change than had taken place in the castle-hall of Schonwaldt since Quentin had partaken of the noontide meal there; and it was indeed one which painted, in the extremity of their dreadful features, the miseries of war—more especially when waged by those most relentless of all agents, the mercenary soldiers of a barbarous age—men who, by habit and profession, had become familiarised with all that was cruel and bloody in the art of war, while they were devoid alike of patriotism, and of the romantic spirit of chivalry.

Instead of the orderly, decent, and somewhat formal meal, at which civil and ecclesiastical officers had, a few hours before, sat mingled in the same apartment, where a light jest could only be uttered in a whisper, and where, even amid superfluity of feasting and of wine, there reigned a decorum which almost amounted to hypocrisy, there was now such a scene of wild and roaring debauchery, as Satan himself, had he taken the chair as founder of the feast, could scarcely have improved.

At the head of the table sat, in the Bishop's throne and state, which had been hastily brought thither from his great council-chamber, the redoubted Boar of Ardennes himself, well deserving that dreaded name, in which he affected to delight, and which he did as much as he could think of to deserve. His head was unhelmeted, but he wore the rest of his ponderous and bright armour, which indeed he rarely laid aside. Over his shoulders hung a strong surcoat, made of the dressed skin of a huge wild boar, the hoofs being of solid silver, and the tusks of the same. The skin of the head was so arranged,

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that drawn over the casque, when the Baron was armed, or over his bare head, in the fashion of a hood, as he often affected when the helmet was laid aside, and as he now wore it, the effect was that of a grinning ghastly monster; and yet the countenance which it overshadowed scarce required such horrors to improve those which were natural to its ordinary expression.

The upper part of De la Marck's face, as Nature had formed it, almost gave the lie to his character; for though his hair, when uncovered, resembled the rude and wild bristles of the hood he had drawn over it, yet an open, high, and manly forehead, broad ruddy cheeks, large, sparkling, light-coloured eyes, and a nose hooked like the beak of the eagle, promised something valiant and generous. But the effect of these more favourable traits was entirely overpowered by his habits of violence and insolence, which, joined to debauchery and intemperance, had stamped upon the features a character inconsistent with the rough gallantry which they would otherwise have exhibited. The former had, from habitual indulgence, swollen the muscles of the cheeks, and those around the eyes, in particular the latter; evil practices and habits had dimmed the eyes themselves, reddened the part of them that should have been white, and given the whole face a hideous likeness of the monster, which it was the terrible Baron's pleasure to resemble. But, from an odd sort of contradiction, De la Marck, while he assumed in other respects the appearance of the Wild Boar, and even seemed pleased with the name, yet endeavoured, by the length and growth of his beard, to conceal the circumstance that had originally procured him that denomination. This was an unusual thickness and projection of the mouth and upper jaw, which, with the huge projecting side teeth, gave that resemblance to the bestial creation, which, joined to the delight that De la Marck had in hunting the forest so called, originally procured for him the name of the Boar of Ardennes. The beard, broad, grisly, and uncombed, neither concealed the natural horrors of the countenance, nor dignified its brutal expression.

The soldiers and officers sat around the table, intermixed with the men of Liege, some of them of the very lowest description; among whom Nikkel Blok the butcher, placed near De la Marck himself, was distinguished by his tucked-up sleeves, which dis-

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played arms smeared to the elbows with blood, as was the cleaver which lay on the table before him. The soldiers wore, most of them, their beards long and grisly, in imitation of their leader; had their hair plaited and turned upwards in the manner that might best improve the natural ferocity of their appearance; and intoxicated, as many of them seemed to be, partly with the sense of triumph, and partly with the long libations of wine which they had been quaffing, presented a spectacle at once hideous and disgusting. The language which they held, and the songs which they sung, without even pretending to pay each other the compliment of listening, were so full of license and blasphemy, that Quentin blessed God that the extremity of the noise prevented them from being intelligible to his companion.

It only remains to say, of the better class of burghers who were associated with William de la Marck's soldiers in this fearful revel, that the wan faces and anxious mien of the greater part, showed that they either disliked their entertainment, or feared their companions; while some of lower education, or a nature more brutal, saw only in the excesses of the soldier a gallant bearing, which they would willingly imitate, and the tone of which they endeavoured to catch so far as was possible, and stimulated themselves to the task by swallowing immense draughts of wine and *Schwarzbier*—indulging a vice which at all times was too common in the Low Countries.

The preparations for the feast had been as disorderly as the quality of the company. The whole of the Bishop's plate—nay, even that belonging to the service of the Church—for the Boar of Ardennes regarded not the imputation of sacrilege—was mingled with black-jacks, or huge tankards made of leather, and drinking-horns of the most ordinary description.

One circumstance of horror remains to be added and accounted for; and we willingly leave the rest of the scene to the imagination of the reader. Amidst the wild license assumed by the soldiers of De la Marck, one who was excluded from the table (a lanzknecht, remarkable for his courage and for his daring behaviour during the storm of the evening), had impudently snatched up a large silver goblet, and carried it off, declaring it should atone for his loss of the share of the feast. The leader laughed till his sides shook at a jest so congenial to the character of the company; but when another, less renowned, it would seem, for audacity in battle, ventured on using the same

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freedom, De la Marck instantly put a check to a jocular practice, which would soon have cleared his table of all the more valuable decorations.—"Ho! by the spirit of the thunder!" he exclaimed, "those who dare not be men when they face the enemy, must not pretend to be thieves among their friends. What! thou frontless dastard, thou—thou who didst wait for opened gate and lowered bridge, when Conrade Horst forced his way over moat and wall, must *thou* be malapert?—Knit him up to the stanchions of the hall-window!—He shall beat time with his feet, while we drink a cup to his safe passage to the devil.

The doom was scarce sooner pronounced than accomplished; and in a moment the wretch wrestled out his last agonies, suspended from the iron bars. His body still hung there when Quentin and the others entered the hall, and, intercepting the pale moonbeam, threw on the castle-floor an uncertain shadow, which dubiously, yet fearfully, intimated the nature of the substance that produced it.

When the Syndic Pavillon was announced from mouth to mouth in this tumultuous meeting, he endeavoured to assume, in right of his authority and influence, an air of importance and equality, which a glance at the fearful object at the window, and at the wild scene around him, rendered it very difficult for him to sustain, notwithstanding the exhortations of Peter, who whispered in his ear, with some perturbation, "Up heart, master, or we are but gone men!"

The Syndic maintained his dignity, however, as well as he could, in a short address, in which he complimented the company upon the great victory gained by the soldiers of De la Marck and the good citizens of Liege.

"Ay," answered De la Marck, sarcastically, "we have brought down the game at last, quoth my lady's brach to the wolf-hound. But ho! Sir Burgomaster, you come like Mars, with Beauty by your side. Who is this fair one?—Unveil, unveil—no woman calls her beauty her own to-night."

"It is my daughter, noble leader," answered Pavillon; "and I am to pray your forgiveness for her wearing her veil. She has a vow for that effect to the Three blessed Kings."

"I will absolve her of it presently," said De la Marck; "for here, with one stroke of a cleaver, will I consecrate myself Bishop of Liege; and I trust one living bishop is worth three dead kings."

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There was a shuddering and murmur among the guests; for the community of Liege, and even some of the rude soldiers reverenced the Kings of Cologne, as they were commonly called, though they respected nothing else.

"Nay, I mean no treason against their defunct majesties," said De la Marck; "only Bishop I am determined to be. A prince both secular and ecclesiastical, having power to bind and loose, will best suit a band of reprobates such as you, to whom no one else would give absolution.—But come hither, noble Burgomaster—sit beside me, when you shall see me make a vacancy for my own preferment. Bring in our predecessor in the holy seat."

A bustle took place in the hall, while Pavillon, excusing himself from the proffered seat of honour, placed himself near the bottom of the table, his followers keeping close behind him, not unlike a flock of sheep which, when a stranger dog is in presence, may be sometimes seen to assemble in the rear of an old bell-wether, who is, from office and authority, judged by them to have rather more courage than themselves. Near the spot sat a very handsome lad, a natural son, as was said, of the ferocious De la Marck, and towards whom he sometimes showed affection, and even tenderness. The mother of the boy, a beautiful concubine, had perished by a blow dealt her by the ferocious leader in a fit of drunkenness or jealousy; and her fate had caused her tyrant as much remorse as he was capable of feeling. His attachment to the surviving orphan might be partly owing to these circumstances. Quentin, who had learned this point of the leader's character from the old priest, planted himself as close as he could to the youth in question; determined to make him, in some way or other, either a hostage or a protector, should other means of safety fail them.

While all stood in a kind of suspense, waiting the event of the orders which the tyrant had issued, one of Pavillon's followers whispered Peter, "Did not our master call that wench his daughter?—Why it cannot be our Trudchen. This strapping lass is taller by two inches; and there is a black lock of hair peeps forth yonder from under her veil. By Saint Michael of the Market-place, you might as well call a black bullock's hide a white heifer's!"

"Hush! hush!" said Peter, with some presence of mind—"What if our master hath a mind to steal a piece of doe-

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venison out of the Bishop's park here, without our good dame's knowledge? And is it for thee or me to be a spy on him?"

"That will not I, brother," answered the other, "though I would not have thought of his turning deer-stealer at his years. Sapperment—what a shy fairy it is! See how she crouches down on yonder seat, behind folk's backs, to escape the gaze of the Marckers.—But hold, hold; what are they about to do with the poor old Bishop?"

As he spoke, the Bishop of Liege, Louis of Bourbon, was dragged into the hall of his own palace, by the brutal soldiery. The dishevelled state of his hair, beard, and attire, bore witness to the ill-treatment he had already received; and some of his sacerdotal robes, hastily flung over him, appeared to have been put on in scorn and ridicule of his quality and character. By good fortune, as Quentin was compelled to think it, the Countess Isabelle, whose feelings at seeing her protector in such an extremity, might have betrayed her own secret and compromised her safety, was so situated as neither to hear nor see what was about to take place; and Durward sedulously interposed his own person before her, so as to keep her from observing alike, and from observation.

The scene which followed was short and fearful. When the unhappy Prelate was brought before the footstool of the savage leader, although in former life only remarkable for his easy and good-natured temper, he showed in this extremity a sense of his dignity and noble blood, well becoming the high race from which he was descended. His look was composed and undismayed; his gesture, when the rude hands which dragged him forward were unloosed, was noble, and at the same time resigned, somewhat between the bearing of a feudal noble, and of a Christian martyr; and so much was even De la Marck himself staggered by the firm demeanour of his prisoner, and recollection of the early benefits he had received from him, that he seemed irresolute, cast down his eyes, and it was not until he had emptied a large goblet of wine, that, resuming his haughty insolence of look and manner, he thus addressed his unfortunate captive:—"Louis of Bourbon," said the truculent soldier, drawing hard his breath, clenching his hands, setting his teeth, and using the other mechanical actions to rouse up and sustain his native ferocity of temper—"I sought your friendship, and

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you rejected mine. What would you now give that it had been otherwise?—Nikkel, be ready."

The butcher rose, seized his weapon, and stealing round behind De la Marck's chair, stood with it uplifted in his bare and sinewy arms.

"Look at that man, Louis of Bourbon," said De la Marck again—"What terms wilt thou now offer, to escape this dangerous hour?"

The Bishop cast a melancholy but unshaken look upon the grisly satellite, who seemed prepared to execute the will of the tyrant, and then he said with firmness, "Hear me, William de la Marck; and good men all, if there be any here who deserve that name, hear the only terms I can offer to this ruffian.—William de la Marck, thou hast stirred up to sedition an imperial city—hast assaulted and taken the palace of a Prince of the Holy German Empire—slain his people—plundered his goods—maltreated his person; for this thou art liable to the Ban of the Empire—hast deserved to be declared outlawed and fugitive, landless and rightless. Thou hast done more than all this. More than mere human laws hast thou broken—more than mere human vengeance hast thou deserved. Thou hast broken into the sanctuary of the Lord—laid violent hands upon a Father of the Church—defiled the house of God with blood and rapine, like a sacrilegious robber"——

"Hast thou yet done?" said De la Marck, fiercely interrupting him, and stamping with his foot.

"No," answered the Prelate, "for I have not yet told thee the terms which you demanded to hear from me."

"Go on," said De la Marck; "and let the terms please me better than the preface, or woe to thy grey head!" And flinging himself back in his seat, he grinded his teeth till the foam flew from his lips, as from the tusks of the savage animal whose name and spoils he wore.

"Such are thy crimes," resumed the Bishop, with calm determination; "now hear the terms, which, as a merciful Prince and a Christian Prelate, setting aside all personal offence, forgiving each peculiar injury, I condescend to offer. Fling down thy leading-staff—renounce thy command—unbind thy prisoners—restore thy spoil—distribute what else thou hast of goods, to relieve those whom thou hast made orphans and widows—array thyself in sackcloth and ashes—take a palmer's

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staff in thy hand, and go barefooted on pilgrimage to Rome, and we will ourselves be intercessors for thee with the Imperial Chamber at Ratisbon for thy life, with our Holy Father the Pope for thy miserable soul."

While Louis of Bourbon proposed these terms, in a tone as decided as if he still occupied his episcopal throne, and as if the usurper kneeled a suppliant at his feet, the tyrant slowly raised himself in his chair, the amazement with which he was at first filled giving way gradually to rage, until, as the Bishop ceased, he looked to Nikkel Blok, and raised his finger, without speaking a word. The ruffian struck as if he had been doing his office in the common shambles, and the murdered Bishop sunk, without a groan, at the foot of his own episcopal throne.* The Liegeois, who were not prepared for so horrible a catastrophe, and who had expected to hear the conference end in some terms of accommodation, started up unanimously, with cries of execration, mingled with shouts of vengeance.

But William de la Marck, raising his tremendous voice above the tumult, and shaking his clenched hand and extended arm, shouted aloud, "How now, ye porkers of Liege! ye wallowers in the mud of the Maes!—do ye dare to mate yourselves with the Wild Boar of Ardennes?—Up, ye Boar's brood!" (an expression by which he himself, and others, often designated his soldiers) "let these Flemish hogs see your tusks!"

Every one of his followers started up at the command, and mingled as they were among their late allies, prepared too for such a surprisal, each had, in an instant, his next neighbour by the collar, while his right hand brandished a broad dagger, that glimmered against lamplight and moonshine. Every arm was uplifted, but no one struck; for the victims were too much surprised for resistance, and it was probably the object of De la Marck only to impose terror on his civic confederates.

But the courage of Quentin Durward, prompt and alert in resolution beyond his years, and stimulated at the moment by all that could add energy to his natural shrewdness and resolution, gave a new turn to the scene. Imitating the action of the followers of De la Marck, he sprung on Carl Eberson, the son of their leader, and mastering him with ease, held his dirk at the boy's throat, while he exclaimed, "Is that your game? then here I play my part."

* Note J. Murder of the Bishop of Liege.

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"Hold! hold!" exclaimed De la Marck, "it is a jest—a jest—Think you I would injure my good friends and allies of the city of Liege!—Soldiers, unloose your holds; sit down; take away the carrion" (giving the Bishop's corpse a thrust with his foot), "which hath caused this strife among friends, and let us drown unkindness in a fresh carouse."

All unloosened their holds, and the citizens and the soldiers stood gazing on each other, as if they scarce knew whether they were friends or foes. Quentin Durward took advantage of the moment.

"Hear me," he said, "William de la Marck, and you burghers and citizens of Liege;—and do you, young sir, stand still" (for the boy Carl was attempting to escape from his gripe); "no harm shall befall you unless another of these sharp jests shall pass round."

"Who art thou, in the fiend's name," said the astonished De la Marck, "who art come to hold terms and take hostages from us in our own lair—from us who exact pledges from others, but yield them to no one?"

"I am a servant of King Louis of France," said Quentin, boldly; "an Archer of his Scottish Guard, as my language and dress may partly tell you. I am here to behold and to report your proceedings; and I see with wonder, that they are those of heathens rather than Christians—of madmen, rather than men possessed of reason. The hosts of Charles of Burgundy will be instantly in motion against you all; and if you wish assistance from France, you must conduct yourself in a different manner.—For you, men of Liege, I advise your instant return to your own city; and if there is any obstruction offered to your departure, I denounce those by whom it is so offered, foes to my master, his Most Gracious Majesty of France."

"France and Liege! France and Liege!" cried the followers of Pavillon, and several other citizens, whose courage began to rise at the bold language held by Quentin.

"France and Liege, and long live the gallant Archer! We will live and die with him!"

William de la Marck's eyes sparkled, and he grasped his dagger, as if about to launch it at the heart of the audacious speaker; but glancing his eye around, he read something in the looks of his soldiers, which even *he* was obliged to respect. Many of them were Frenchmen, and all of them knew the

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private support which William had received, both in men and in money, from that kingdom; nay, some of them were rather startled at the violent and sacrilegious action which had been just committed. The name of Charles of Burgundy, a person likely to resent to the utmost the deeds of that night, had an alarming sound, and the extreme impolicy of at once quarrelling with the Liegeois and provoking the Monarch of France, made an appalling impression on their minds, confused as their intellects were. De la Marck, in short, saw he would not be supported, even by his own band, in any farther act of immediate violence, and relaxing the terrors of his brow and eye, declared that "he had not the least design against his good friends of Liege, all of whom were at liberty to depart from Schonwaldt at their pleasure; although he had hoped they would revel one night with him, at least, in honour of their victory." He added, with more calmness than he commonly used, that "he would be ready to enter into negotiation concerning the partition of spoil, and the arrangement of measures for their mutual defence, either the next day, or as soon after as they would. Meantime he trusted that the Scottish gentleman would honour his feast by remaining all night at Schonwaldt."

The young Scot returned his thanks, but said, his motions must be determined by those of Pavillon, to whom he was directed particularly to attach himself; but that, unquestionably, he would attend him on his next return to the quarters of the valiant William de la Marck.

"If you depend on my motions," said Pavillon, hastily and aloud, "you are likely to quit Schonwaldt without an instant's delay;—and, if you do not come back to Schonwaldt, save in my company, you are not likely to see it again in a hurry."

This last part of the sentence the honest citizen muttered to himself, afraid of the consequences of giving audible vent to feelings, which, nevertheless, he was unable altogether to suppress.

"Keep close about me, my brisk Kurschner lads," he said to his body-guard, "and we will get as fast as we can out of this den of thieves."

Most of the better classes of the Liegeois seemed to entertain similar opinions with the Syndic, and there had been scarce so

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much joy amongst them at the obtaining possession of Schonwaldt, as now seemed to arise from the prospect of getting safe out of it. They were suffered to leave the castle without opposition of any kind; and glad was Quentin when he turned his back on those formidable walls.

For the first time since they had entered that dreadful hall, Quentin ventured to ask the young Countess how she did.

"Well, well," she answered, in feverish haste, "excellently well—do not stop to ask a question; let us not lose an instant in words—Let us fly—let us fly!"

She endeavoured to mend her pace as she spoke; but with so little success, that she must have fallen from exhaustion had not Durward supported her. With the tenderness of a mother, when she conveys her infant out of danger, the young Scot raised his precious charge in his arms; and while she encircled his neck with one arm, lost to every other thought save the desire of escaping, he would not have wished one of the risks of the night unencountered, since such had been the conclusion.

The honest Burgomaster was, in his turn, supported and dragged forward by his faithful counsellor Peter, and another of his clerks; and thus, in breathless haste, they reached the banks of the river, encountering many strolling bands of citizens, who were eager to know the events of the siege, and the truth of certain rumours already afloat, that the conquerors had quarrelled among themselves.

Evading their curiosity as they best could, the exertions of Peter and some of his companions at length procured a boat for the use of the company, and with it an opportunity of enjoying some repose, equally welcome to Isabelle, who continued to lie almost motionless in the arms of her deliverer, and to the worthy Burgomaster, who, after delivering a broken string of thanks to Durward, whose mind was at the time too much occupied to answer him, began a long harangue, which he addressed to Peter, upon his own courage and benevolence, and the dangers to which these virtues had exposed him, on this and other occasions.

"Peter, Peter," he said, resuming the complaint of the preceding evening, "if I had not had a bold heart, I would never have stood out against paying the burghers-twentieths, when every other living soul was willing to pay the same.—Ay, and then a less stout heart had not seduced me into that other

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battle of Saint Tron, where a Hainault man-at-arms thrust me into a muddy ditch with his lance, which neither heart nor hand that I had could help me out of, till the battle was over.—Ay, and then, Peter, this very night my courage seduced me, moreover, into too strait a corselet, which would have been the death of me, but for the aid of this gallant young gentleman, whose trade is fighting, whereof I wish him heartily joy. And then for my tenderness of heart, Peter, it has made a poor man of me—that is, it would have made a poor man of me, if I had not been tolerably well to pass in this wicked world;—and Heaven knows what trouble it is likely to bring on me yet, with ladies, countesses, and keeping of secrets, which, for aught I know, may cost me half my fortune, and my neck into the bargain!"

Quentin could remain no longer silent, but assured him, that whatever danger or damage he should incur on the part of the young lady now under his protection, should be thankfully acknowledged, and, as far as was possible, repaid.

"I thank you, young Master Squire Archer, I thank you," answered the citizen of Liege; "but who was it told you that I desired any repayment at your hand for doing the duty of an honest man? I only regretted that it might cost me so and so; and I hope I may have leave to say so much to my lieutenant, without either grudging my loss or my peril."

Quentin accordingly concluded that his present friend was one of the numerous class of benefactors to others, who take out their reward in grumbling, without meaning more than, by showing their grievances, to exalt a little the idea of the valuable service by which they have incurred them, and therefore prudently remained silent, and suffered the Syndic to maunder on to his lieutenant concerning the risk and the loss he had encountered by his zeal for the public good, and his disinterested services to individuals, until they reached his own habitation.

The truth was, that the honest citizen felt that he had lost a little consequence, by suffering the young stranger to take the lead at the crisis which had occurred at the castle-hall of Schonwaldt; and however delighted with the effect of Durward's interference at the moment, it seemed to him, on reflection, that he had sustained a diminution of importance, for which he endeavoured to obtain compensation, by exaggerating the claims which he had upon the gratitude of his country in

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general, his friends in particular, and more especially still, on the Countess of Croye, and her youthful protector.

But when the boat stopped at the bottom of his garden, and he had got himself assisted on shore by Peter, it seemed as if the touch of his own threshold had at once dissipated those feelings of wounded self-opinion and jealousy, and converted the discontented and obscured demagogue into the honest, kind, hospitable, and friendly host. He called loudly for Trudchen, who presently appeared; for fear and anxiety would permit few within the walls of Liege to sleep during that eventful night. She was charged to pay the utmost attention to the care of the beautiful and half-fainting stranger; and, admiring her personal charms, while she pitied her distress, Gertrude discharged the hospitable duty with the zeal and affection of a sister.

Late as it now was, and fatigued as the Syndic appeared, Quentin, on his side, had difficulty to escape a flask of choice and costly wine, as old as the battle of Azincour; and must have submitted to take his share, however unwilling, but for the appearance of the mother of the family, whom Pavillon's loud summons for the keys of the cellar brought forth from her bedroom. She was a jolly little round-about woman, who had been pretty in her time, but whose principal characteristics for several years had been a red and sharp nose, a shrill voice, and a determination that the Syndic, in consideration of the authority which he exercised when abroad, should remain under the rule of due discipline at home.

So soon as she understood the nature of the debate between her husband and his guest, she declared roundly, that the former, instead of having occasion for more wine, had got too much already; and, far from using, in furtherance of his request, any of the huge bunch of keys which hung by a silver chain at her waist, she turned her back on him without ceremony, and ushered Quentin to the neat and pleasant apartment in which he was to spend the night, amid such appliances to rest and comfort as probably he had till that moment been entirely a stranger to; so much did the wealthy Flemings excel, not merely the poor and rude Scots, but the French themselves, in all the conveniences of domestic life.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-THIRD.

THE FLIGHT.

——— Now bid me run,
And I will strive with things impossible;
Yea, get the better of them.
* * * *
——— Set on your foot;
And, with a heart new fired, I follow you,
To do I know not what.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

IN spite of a mixture of joy and fear, doubt, anxiety, and other agitating passions, the exhausting fatigues of the preceding day were powerful enough to throw the young Scot into a deep and profound repose, which lasted until late on the day following; when his worthy host entered the apartment, with looks of care on his brow.

He seated himself by his guest's bedside, and began a long and complicated discourse upon the domestic duties of a married life, and especially upon the awful power and right supremacy which it became married men to sustain in all differences of opinion with their wives. Quentin listened with some anxiety. He knew that husbands, like other belligerent powers, were sometimes disposed to sing *Te Deum*, rather to conceal a defeat than to celebrate a victory; and he hastened to probe the matter more closely, "by hoping their arrival had been attended with no inconvenience to the good lady of the household."

"Inconvenience!—no," answered the Burgomaster—"No woman can be less taken unawares than Mother Mabel—always happy to see her friends—always a clean lodging and a handsome meal ready for them, with God's blessing on bed and board—No woman on earth so hospitable—only 'tis pity her temper is something particular."

"Our residence here is disagreeable to her, in short?" said the Scot, starting out of bed, and beginning to dress himself hastily. "Were I but sure the Lady Isabelle were fit for travel after the horrors of the last night, we would not increase the offence by remaining here an instant longer."

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"Nay," said Pavillon, "that is just what the young lady herself said to Mother Mabel; and truly I wish you saw the colour that came to her face when she said it—a milkmaid that has skated five miles to market against the frost-wind is a lily compared to it—I do not wonder Mother Mabel may be a little jealous, poor dear soul."

"Has the Lady Isabelle then left her apartment?" said the youth, continuing his toilette operations with more despatch than before.

"Yes," replied Pavillon; "and she expects your approach with much impatience, to determine which way you shall go—since you are both determined on going. But I trust you will tarry breakfast?"

"Why did you not tell me this sooner?" said Durward, impatiently.

"Softly—softly," said the Syndic; "I have told you too soon, I think, if it puts you into such a hasty fluster. Now I have some more matter for your ear, if I saw you had some patience to listen to me."

"Speak it, worthy sir, as soon and as fast as you can—I listen devoutly."

"Well then," resumed the Burgomaster, "I have but one word to say, and that is, that Trudchen, who is as sorry to part with yonder pretty lady as if she had been some sister of hers, wants you to take some other disguise, for there is word in the town that the Ladies of Croye travel the country in pilgrim's dresses, attended by a French life-guardsman of the Scottish Archers; and it is said one of them was brought into Schonwaldt last night by a Bohemian after we had left it; and it was said still farther, that this same Bohemian had assured William de la Marck that you were charged with no message either to him or to the good people of Liege, and that you had stolen away the young Countess, and travelled with her as her paramour. And all this news hath come from Schonwaldt this morning; and it has been told to us and the other councillors, who know not well what to advise; for though our own opinion is that William de la Marck has been a thought too rough both with the Bishop and with ourselves, yet there is a great belief that he is a good-natured soul at bottom—that is, when he is sober—and that he is the only leader in the world to command us against the Duke of Burgundy;—and, in truth,

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as matters stand, it is partly my own mind that we must keep fair with him, for we have gone too far to draw back."

"Your daughter advises well," said Quentin Durward, abstaining from reproaches or exhortations, which he saw would be alike unavailing to sway a resolution, which had been adopted by the worthy magistrate in compliance at once with the prejudices of his party and the inclination of his wife—"Your daughter counsels well—We must part in disguise, and that instantly. We may, I trust, rely upon you for the necessary secrecy, and for the means of escape?"

"With all my heart—with all my heart," said the honest citizen, who, not much satisfied with the dignity of his own conduct, was eager to find some mode of atonement. "I cannot but remember that I owed you my life last night, both for unclasping that accursed steel doublet, and helping me through the other scrape, which was worse; for yonder Boar and his brood look more like devils than men. So I will be true to you as blade to haft, as our cutlers say, who are the best in the whole world. Nay, now you are ready, come this way—you shall see how far I can trust you."

The Syndic led him from the chamber in which he had slept to his own counting-room, in which he transacted his affairs of business; and after bolting the door, and casting a piercing and careful eye around him, he opened a concealed and vaulted closet behind the tapestry, in which stood more than one iron chest. He proceeded to open one which was full of guilders, and placed it at Quentin's discretion, to take whatever sum he might think necessary for his companion's expenses and his own.

As the money with which Quentin was furnished on leaving Plessis was now nearly expended, he hesitated not to accept the sum of two hundred guilders; and by doing so took a great weight from the mind of Pavillon, who considered the desperate transaction in which he thus voluntarily became the creditor, as an atonement for the breach of hospitality which various considerations in a great measure compelled him to commit.

Having carefully locked his treasure-chamber, the wealthy Fleming next conveyed his guest to the parlour, where, in full possession of her activity of mind and body, though pale from the scenes of the preceding night, he found the Countess

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attired in the fashion of a Flemish maiden of the middling class. No other was present excepting Trudchen, who was sedulously employed in completing the Countess's dress, and instructing her how to bear herself. She extended her hand to him, which, when he had reverently kissed, she said to him, "Seignior Quentin, we must leave our friends here unless I would bring on them a part of the misery which has pursued me ever since my father's death. You must change your dress and go with me, unless you also are tired of befriending a being so unfortunate."

"I!—I tired of being your attendant!—To the end of the earth will I guard you! But you—you yourself—are you equal to the task you undertake?—Can you, after the terrors of last night"——

"Do not recall them to my memory," answered the Countess; "I remember but the confusion of a horrid dream.—Has the excellent Bishop escaped?"

"I trust he is in freedom," said Quentin, making a sign to Pavillon, who seemed about to enter on the dreadful narrative, to be silent.

"Is it possible for us to rejoin him;—Hath he gathered any power?" said the lady.

"His only hopes are in Heaven," said the Scot; "but wherever you wish to go, I stand by your side, a determined guide and guard."

"We will consider," said Isabelle; and, after a moment's pause, she added, "A convent would be my choice, but that I fear it would prove a weak defence against those who pursue me."

"Hem! hem!" said the Syndic; "I could not well recommend a convent within the district of Liege; because the Boar of Ardennes, though in the main a brave leader, a trusty confederate, and a well-wisher to our city, has, nevertheless, rough humours, and payeth, on the whole, little regard to cloisters, convents, nunneries, and the like. Men say that there are a score of nuns—that is, such as were nuns—who march always with his company."

"Get yourself in readiness hastily, Seignior Durward," said Isabelle, interrupting this detail, "since to your faith I must needs commit myself."

No sooner had the Syndic and Quentin left the room, than Isabelle began to ask of Gertrude various questions concerning

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the roads, and so forth, with such clearness of spirit and pertinence, that the latter could not help exclaiming, "Lady, I wonder at you!—I have heard of masculine firmness, but yours appears to me more than belongs to humanity."

"Necessity," answered the Countess—"necessity, my friend, is the mother of courage, as of invention. No long time since, I might have fainted when I saw a drop of blood shed from a trifling cut—I have since seen life-blood flow around me, I may say, in waves, yet I have retained my senses and my self-possession.—Do not think it was an easy task," she added, laying on Gertrude's arm a trembling hand, although she still spoke with a firm voice; "the little world within me is like a garrison besieged by a thousand foes, whom nothing but the most determined resolution can keep from storming it on every hand, and at every moment. Were my situation one whit less perilous than it is—were I not sensible that my only chance to escape a fate more horrible than death, is to retain my recollection and self-possession—Gertrude, I would at this moment throw myself into your arms, and relieve my bursting bosom by such a transport of tears and agony of terror, as never rushed from a breaking heart!"

"Do not do so, lady!" said the sympathising Fleming; "take courage, tell your beads, throw yourself on the care of Heaven; and surely, if ever Heaven sent a deliverer to one ready to perish, that bold and adventurous young gentleman must be designed for yours. There is one, too," she added, blushing deeply, "in whom I have some interest. Say nothing to my father; but I have ordered my bachelor, Hans Glover, to wait for you at the eastern gate, and never to see my face more, unless he brings word that he has guided you safe from the territory."

To kiss her tenderly was the only way in which the young Countess could express her thanks to the frank and kind-hearted city-maiden, who returned the embrace affectionately, and added, with a smile, "Nay, if two maidens and their devoted bachelors cannot succeed in a disguise and an escape, the world is changed from what I am told it wont to be."

A part of this speech again called the colour into the Countess's pale cheeks, which was not lessened by Quentin's sudden appearance. He entered completely attired as a Flemish boor of the better class, in the holyday suit of Peter, who expressed his interest in the young Scot by the readiness with

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which he parted with it for his use; and swore, at the same time, that were he to be curried and tugged worse than ever was bullock's hide, they should make nothing out of him, to the betraying of the young folks. Two stout horses had been provided by the activity of Mother Mabel, who really desired the Countess and her attendant no harm, so that she could make her own house and family clear of the dangers which might attend upon harbouring them. She beheld them mount and go off with great satisfaction, after telling them that they would find their way to the east gate by keeping their eye on Peter, who was to walk in that direction as their guide, but without holding any visible communication with them. The instant her guests had departed, Mother Mabel took the opportunity to read a long practical lecture to Trudchen upon the folly of reading romances, whereby the flaunting ladies of the Court were grown so bold and venturous, that, instead of applying to learn some honest housewifery, they must ride, forsooth, a damsel-erranting through the country, with no better attendant than some idle squire, debauched page, or rake-helly archer from foreign parts, to the great danger of their health, the impoverishing of their substance, and the irreparable prejudice of their reputation.

All this Gertrude heard in silence, and without reply; but, considering her character, it might be doubted whether she derived from it the practical inference which it was her mother's purpose to enforce.

Meantime, the travellers had gained the eastern gate of the city, traversing crowds of people, who were fortunately too much busied in the political events and rumours of the hour, to give any attention to a couple who had so little to render their appearance remarkable. They passed the guards in virtue of a permission obtained for them by Pavillon, but in the name of his colleague Rouslaer, and they took leave of Peter Geislaer with a friendly though brief exchange of good wishes on either side. Immediately afterwards, they were joined by a stout young man, riding a good grey horse, who presently made himself known as Hans Glover, the bachelor of Trudchen Pavillon. He was a young fellow with a good Flemish countenance—not, indeed, of the most intellectual cast, but arguing more hilarity and good-humour than wit, and, as the Countess could not help thinking, scarce worthy to be bachelor to the generous

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Trudchen. He seemed, however, fully desirous to second the views which she had formed in their favour; for, saluting them respectfully, he asked of the Countess in Flemish on which road she desired to be conducted?

"Guide me," said she, "towards the nearest town on the frontiers of Brabant."

"You have then settled the end and object of your journey?" said Quentin, approaching his horse to that of Isabelle, and speaking French, which their guide did not understand.

"Surely," replied the young lady; "for, situated as I now am, it must be of no small detriment to me if I were to prolong a journey in my present circumstances, even though the termination should be a rigorous prison."

"A prison?" said Quentin.

"Yes, my friend, a prison; but I will take care that you shall not share it."

"Do not talk—do not think of me," said Quentin. "Saw I you but safe, my own concerns are little worth minding."

"Do not speak so loud," said the Lady Isabelle; "you will surprise our guide—you see he has already rode on before us;" —for, in truth, the good-natured Fleming, doing as he desired to be done by, had removed from them the restraint of a third person, upon Quentin's first motion towards the lady.—"Yes," she continued, when she noticed they were free from observation, "to you, my friend, my protector—why should I be ashamed to call you what Heaven has made you to me?—to you it is my duty to say, that my resolution is taken to return to my native country, and to throw myself on the mercy of the Duke of Burgundy. It was mistaken, though well-meant advice, which induced me ever to withdraw from his protection, and place myself under that of the crafty and false Louis of France."

"And you resolve to become the bride, then, of the Count of Campo-basso, the unworthy favourite of Charles?"

Thus spoke Quentin with a voice in which internal agony struggled with his desire to assume an indifferent tone, like that of the poor condemned criminal, when, affecting a firmness which he is far from feeling, he asks if the death-warrant be arrived.

"No, Durward, no," said the Lady Isabelle, sitting up erect in her saddle, "to that hated condition all Burgundy's power shall not sink a daughter of the House of Croye. Burgundy

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may seize on my lands and fiefs, he may imprison my person in a convent; but that is the worst I have to expect; and worse than that I will endure ere I give my hand to Campo-basso."

"The worst!" said Quentin; "and what worse can there be than plunder and imprisonment?—Oh, think, while you have God's free air around you, and one by your side who will hazard life to conduct you to England, to Germany, even to Scotland, in all of which you shall find generous protectors—Oh, while this is the case, do not resolve so rashly to abandon the means of liberty, the best gift that Heaven gives!—Oh, well sung a poet of my own land—

> 'Ah, freedom is a noble thing,—
> Freedom makes man to have liking—
> Freedom the zest to pleasure gives—
> He lives at ease who freely lives.
> Grief, sickness, poortith, want, are all
> Summ'd up within the name of thrall.'"*

She listened with a melancholy smile to her guide's tirade in praise of liberty; and then answered, after a moment's pause, "Freedom is for man alone—woman must ever seek a protector, since nature made her incapable to defend herself. And where am I to find one?—In that voluptuary Edward of England—in the inebriated Wenceslaus of Germany—in Scotland?—Ah, Durward, were I your sister, and could you promise me shelter in some of those mountain-glens which you love to describe, where, for charity, or for the few jewels I have preserved, I might lead an unharassed life, and forget the lot I was born to—Could you promise me the protection of some honoured matron of the land—of some baron whose heart was as true as his sword—that were indeed a prospect, for which it were worth the risk of farther censure to wander farther and wider!"

There was a faltering tenderness of voice with which the Countess Isabelle made this admission, that at once filled Quentin with a sensation of joy, and cut him to the very heart. He hesitated a moment ere he made an answer, hastily reviewing in his mind the possibility there might be that he could procure her shelter in Scotland; but the melancholy truth rushed on him, that it would be alike base and cruel to point out to her a course, which he had not the most distant power

* [These noble lines form the commencement of the metrical Life of Robert the Bruce, by Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen in the year 1375.]

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or means to render safe. "Lady," he said at last, "I should act foully against my honour and oath of chivalry, did I suffer you to ground any plan upon the thoughts that I have the power in Scotland to afford you other protection than that of the poor arm which is now by your side. I scarce know that my blood flows in the veins of an individual who now lives in my native land. The Knight of Innerquharity stormed our Castle at midnight, and cut off all that belonged to my name. Were I again in Scotland, our feudal enemies are numerous and powerful, I single and weak; and even had the King a desire to do me justice, he dared not, for the sake of redressing the wrongs of a poor individual, provoke a chief who rides with five hundred horse."

"Alas!" said the Countess, "there is then no corner of the world safe from oppression, since it rages as unrestrained amongst those wild hills which afford so few objects to covet, as in our rich and abundant Lowlands!"

"It is a sad truth, and I dare not deny it," said the Scot, "that for little more than the pleasure of revenge, and the lust of bloodshed, our hostile clans do the work of executioners on each other; and Ogilvies and the like act the same scenes in Scotland, as De la Marck and his robbers do in this country."

"No more of Scotland, then," said Isabelle, with a tone of indifference, either real or affected—"no more of Scotland,—which indeed I mentioned but in jest, to see if you really dared to recommend to me, as a place of rest, the most distracted kingdom in Europe. It was but a trial of your sincerity, which I rejoice to see may be relied on, even when your partialities are most strongly excited. So, once more, I will think of no other protection than can be afforded by the first honourable baron holding of Duke Charles, to whom I am determined to render myself."

"And why not rather betake yourself to your own estates, and to your own strong castle, as you designed when at Tours?" said Quentin. "Why not call around you the vassals of your father, and make treaty with Burgundy, rather than surrender yourself to him? Surely there must be many a bold heart that would fight in your cause; and I know at least of one, who would willingly lay down his life to give example."

"Alas!" said the Countess, "that scheme, the suggestion of the crafty Louis, and, like all which he ever suggested, designed

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more for his advantage than for mine, has become impracticable, since it was betrayed to Burgundy by the double traitor Zamet Hayraddin. My kinsman was then imprisoned, and my houses garrisoned. Any attempt of mine would but expose my dependants to the vengeance of Duke Charles; and why should I occasion more bloodshed than has already taken place on so worthless an account? No, I will submit myself to my Sovereign as a dutiful vassal, in all which shall leave my personal freedom of choice uninfringed; the rather that I trust my kinswoman, the Countess Hameline, who first counselled, and indeed urged my flight, has already taken this wise and honourable step."

"Your kinswoman!" repeated Quentin, awakened to recollections to which the young Countess was a stranger, and which the rapid succession of perilous and stirring events, had, as matters of nearer concern, in fact banished from his memory.

"Ay—my aunt—the Countess Hameline of Croye—know you aught of her?" said the Countess Isabelle; "I trust she is now under the protection of the Burgundian banner. You are silent. Know you aught of her?"

The last question, urged in a tone of the most anxious inquiry, obliged Quentin to give some account of what he knew of the Countess's fate. He mentioned, that he had been summoned to attend her in a flight from Liege, which he had no doubt the Lady Isabelle would be partaker in—he mentioned the discovery that had been made after they had gained the forest—and finally, he told his own return to the castle, and the circumstances in which he found it. But he said nothing of the views with which it was plain the Lady Hameline had left the Castle of Schonwaldt, and as little about the floating report of her having fallen into the hands of William de la Marck. Delicacy prevented his even hinting at the one, and regard for the feelings of his companion, at a moment when strength and exertion were most demanded of her, prevented him from alluding to the latter, which had, besides, only reached him as a mere rumour.

This tale, though abridged of those important particulars, made a strong impression on the Countess Isabelle, who, after riding some time in silence, said at last, with a tone of cold displeasure, "And so you abandoned my unfortunate relative in a wild forest, at the mercy of a vile Bohemian and a traitor-

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ous waiting-woman?—Poor kinswoman, thou wert wont to praise this youth's good faith!"

"Had I not done so, madam," said Quentin, not unreasonably offended at the turn thus given to his gallantry, "what had been the fate of one to whose service I was far more devotedly bound? Had I *not* left the Countess Hameline of Croye to the charge of those whom she had herself selected as counsellors and advisers, the Countess Isabelle had been ere now the bride of William de la Marck, the Wild Boar of Ardennes."

"You are right," said the Countess Isabelle, in her usual manner; "and I, who have the advantage of your unhesitating devotion, have done you foul and ungrateful wrong. But oh, my unhappy kinswoman! and the wretch Marthon, who enjoyed so much of her confidence, and deserved it so little—it was she that introduced to my kinswoman the wretched Zamet and Hayraddin Maugrabin, who, by their pretended knowledge in soothsaying and astrology, obtained a great ascendency over her mind; it was she who, strengthening their predictions, encouraged her in—I know not what to call them—delusions concerning matches and lovers, which my kinswoman's age rendered ungraceful and improbable. I doubt not that, from the beginning, we had been surrounded by these snares by Louis of France, in order to determine us to take refuge at his Court, or rather to put ourselves into his power; after which rash act on our part, how unkingly, unknightly, ignobly, ungentleman-like, he hath conducted himself towards us, you, Quentin Durward, can bear witness. But, alas! my kinswoman—what think you will be her fate?"

Endeavouring to inspire hopes which he scarce felt, Durward answered, that the avarice of these people was stronger than any other passion; that Marthon, even when he left them, seemed to act rather as the Lady Hameline's protectress; and in fine, that it was difficult to conceive any object these wretches could accomplish by the ill usage or murder of the Countess, whereas they might be gainers by treating her well, and putting her to ransom.

To lead the Countess Isabelle's thoughts from this melancholy subject, Quentin frankly told her the treachery of the Maugrabin, which he had discovered in the night-quarter near Namur, and which appeared the result of an agreement betwixt the King and William de la Marck. Isabelle shuddered with

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horror, and then recovering herself said, "I am ashamed, and I have sinned in permitting myself so far to doubt of the saints' protection, as for an instant to have deemed possible the accomplishment of a scheme so utterly cruel, base, and dishonourable, while there are pitying eyes in heaven to look down on human miseries. It is not a thing to be thought of with fear or abhorrence, but to be rejected as such a piece of incredible treachery and villany, as it were atheism to believe could ever be successful. But I now see plainly why that hypocritical Marthon often seemed to foster every seed of petty jealousy or discontent betwixt my poor kinswoman and myself, whilst she always mixed with flattery, addressed to the individual who was present, whatever could prejudice her against her absent kinswoman. Yet never did I dream she could have proceeded so far as to have caused my once affectionate kinswoman to have left me behind in the perils of Schonwaldt, while she made her own escape."

"Did the Lady Hameline not mention to you, then," said Quentin, "her intended flight?"

"No," replied the Countess, "but she alluded to some communication which Marthon was to make to me. To say truth, my poor kinswoman's head was so turned by the mysterious jargon of the miserable Hayraddin, whom that day she had admitted to a long and secret conference, and she threw out so many strange hints that—that—in short, I cared not to press on her, when in that humour, for any explanation. Yet it was cruel to leave me behind her."

"I will excuse the Lady Hameline from intending such unkindness," said Quentin; "for such was the agitation of the moment, and the darkness of the hour, that I believe the Lady Hameline as certainly conceived herself accompanied by her niece, as I at the same time, deceived by Marthon's dress and demeanour, supposed I was in the company of both the Ladies of Croye:—and of *her* especially," he added, with a low but determined voice, "without whom the wealth of worlds would not have tempted me to leave Schonwaldt."

Isabelle stooped her head forward, and seemed scarce to hear the emphasis with which Quentin had spoken. But she turned her face to him again when he began to speak of the policy of Louis; and it was not difficult for them, by mutual communication, to ascertain that the Bohemian brothers, with their

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accomplice Marthon, had been the agents of that crafty monarch, although Zamet, the elder of them, with a perfidy peculiar to his race, had attempted to play a double game, and had been punished accordingly. In the same humour of mutual confidence, and forgetting the singularity of their own situation, as well as the perils of the road, the travellers pursued their journey for several hours, only stopping to refresh their horses at a retired dorff, or hamlet, to which they were conducted by Hans Glover, who, in all other respects, as well as in leaving them much to their own freedom in conversation, conducted himself like a person of reflection and discretion.

Meantime, the artificial distinction which divided the two lovers (for such we may now term them) seemed dissolved, or removed, by the circumstances in which they were placed; for if the Countess boasted the higher rank, and was by birth entitled to a fortune incalculably larger than that of the youth, whose revenue lay in his sword, it was to be considered that, for the present, she was as poor as he, and for her safety, honour, and life, exclusively indebted to his presence of mind, valour, and devotion. They *spoke* not indeed of love, for though the young lady, her heart full of gratitude and confidence, might have pardoned such a declaration, yet Quentin, on whose tongue there was laid a check, both by natural timidity, and by the sentiments of chivalry, would have held it an unworthy abuse of her situation had he said anything which could have the appearance of taking undue advantage of the opportunities which it afforded them. They *spoke* not then of love, but the thoughts of it were on both sides unavoidable; and thus they were placed in that relation to each other, in which sentiments of mutual regard are rather understood than announced, and which, with the freedoms which it permits, and the uncertainties that attend it, often forms the most delightful hours of human existence, and as frequently leads to those which are darkened by disappointment, fickleness, and all the pains of blighted hope and unrequited attachment.

It was two hours after noon, when the travellers were alarmed by the report of the guide, who, with paleness and horror in his countenance, said that they were pursued by a party of De la Marck's *Schwarz-reiters*. These soldiers, or rather banditti, were bands levied in the Lower Circles of Germany, and resembled the lanzknechts in every particular, except that the

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former acted as light cavalry. To maintain the name of Black Troopers, and to strike additional terror into their enemies, they usually rode on black chargers, and smeared with black ointment their arms and accoutrements, in which operation their hands and faces often had their share. In morals and in ferocity these Schwarz-reiters emulated their pedestrian brethren the Lansknechts.*

On looking back, and discovering along the long level road which they had traversed a cloud of dust advancing, with one or two of the headmost troopers riding furiously in front of it, Quentin addressed his companion—"Dearest Isabelle, I have no weapon left save my sword; but since I cannot fight for you, I will fly with you. Could we gain yonder wood that is before us ere they come up, we may easily find means to escape."

"So be it, my only friend," said Isabelle, pressing her horse to the gallop; "and thou, good fellow," she added, addressing Hans Glover; "get thee off to another road, and do not stay to partake our misfortune and danger."

The honest Fleming shook his head, and answered her generous exhortation, with *Nein, nein! das geht nicht,*† and continued to attend them, all three riding towards the shelter of the wood as fast as their jaded horses could go, pursued, at the same time, by the Schwarz-reiters, who increased their pace when they saw them fly. But notwithstanding the fatigue of the horses, still the fugitives being unarmed, and riding lighter in consequence, had considerably the advantage of the pursuers, and were within about a quarter of a mile of the wood, when a body of men-at-arms, under a knight's pennon, was discovered advancing from the cover, so as to intercept their flight.

"They have bright armour," said Isabelle; "they must be Burgundians. Be they who they will, we must yield to them, rather than to the lawless miscreants who pursue us."

A moment after, she exclaimed, looking on the pennon, "I know the cloven heart which it displays! It is the banner of the Count of Crèvecœur, a noble Burgundian—to him I will surrender myself."

Quentin Durward sighed; but what other alternative remained, and how happy would he have been but an instant before, to have been certain of the escape of Isabelle, even under

* Note K. Schwarz-reiters. † "No, no! that must not be."

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worse terms? They soon joined the band of Crèvecœur, and the Countess demanded to speak to the leader, who had halted his party till he should reconnoitre the Black Troopers; and as he gazed on her with doubt and uncertainty, she said, "Noble Count—Isabelle of Croye, the daughter of your old companion in arms, Count Reinold of Croye, renders herself, and asks protection from your valour for her and hers."

"Thou shalt have it, fair kinswoman, were it against a host—always excepting my liege lord of Burgundy. But there is little time to talk of it. These filthy-looking fiends have made a halt, as if they intended to dispute the matter.—By Saint George of Burgundy, they have the insolence to advance against the banner of Crèvecœur! What! will not the knaves be ruled?—Damian, my lance—Advance banner—Lay your spears in the rest—Crèvecœur to the Rescue!"

Crying his war-cry, and followed by his men-at-arms, he galloped rapidly forward to charge the Schwarz-reiters.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOURTH.

THE SURRENDER.

Rescue or none, Sir Knight, I am your captive:
Deal with me what your nobleness suggests—
Thinking the chance of war may one day place you
Where I must now be reckon'd—i' the roll
Of melancholy prisoners.

ANONYMOUS.

THE skirmish betwixt the Schwarz-reiters and the Burgundian men-at-arms lasted scarcely five minutes, so soon were the former put to the rout by the superiority of the latter, in armour, weight of horse, and military spirit. In less than the space we have mentioned, the Count of Crèvecœur, wiping his bloody sword upon his horse's mane ere he sheathed it, came back to the verge of the forest, where Isabelle had remained a spectator of the combat. One part of his people followed him, while the other continued to pursue the flying enemy for a little space along the causeway.

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"It is shame," said the Count, "that the weapons of knights and gentlemen should be soiled by the blood of those brutal swine."

So saying, he returned his weapon to the sheath, and added, "This is a rough welcome to your home, my pretty cousin, but wandering princesses must expect such adventures. And well I came up in time, for, let me assure you, the Black Troopers respect a countess's coronet as little as a country-wench's coif, and I think your retinue is not qualified for much resistance."

"My Lord Count," said the Lady Isabelle, "without farther preface, let me know if I am a prisoner, and where you are to conduct me."

"You know, you silly child," answered the Count, "how I would answer that question, did it rest on my own will. But you, and your foolish match-making, marriage-hunting aunt, have made such wild use of your wings of late, that I fear you must be contented to fold them up in a cage for a little while. For my part, my duty, and it is a sad one, will be ended when I have conducted you to the Court of the Duke, at Peronne; for which purpose, I hold it necessary to deliver the command of this reconnoitring party to my nephew, Count Stephen, while I return with you thither, as I think you may need an intercessor —And I hope the young giddy-pate will discharge his duty wisely."

"So please you, fair uncle," said Count Stephen, "if you doubt my capacity to conduct the men-at-arms, even remain with them yourself, and I will be the servant and guard of the Countess Isabelle of Croye."

"No doubt, fair nephew," answered his uncle, "this were a goodly improvement on my scheme; but methinks I like it as well in the way I planned it. Please you, therefore, to take notice, that your business here is not to hunt after and stick these black hogs, for which you seemed but now to have felt an especial vocation, but to collect and bring to me true tidings what is going forward in the country of Liege, concerning which we hear such wild rumours. Let some half-score of lances follow me, and the rest remain with my banner under your guidance."

"Yet one moment, cousin of Crèvecœur," said the Countess Isabelle, "and let me, in yielding myself prisoner, stipulate at least for the safety of those who have befriended me in my mis-

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fortunes. Permit this good fellow, my trusty guide, to go back unharmed to his native town of Liege."

"My nephew," said Crèvecœur, after looking sharply at Glover's honest breadth of countenance, "shall guard this good fellow, who seems, indeed, to have little harm in him, as far into the territory as he himself advances, and then leave him at liberty."

"Fail not to remember me to the kind Gertrude," said the Countess to her guide, and added, taking a string of pearls from under her veil, "Pray her to wear this in remembrance of her unhappy friend."

Honest Glover took the string of pearls, and kissed with clownish gesture, but with sincere kindness, the fair hand which had found such a delicate mode of remunerating his own labours and peril.

"Umph! signs and tokens!" said the Count; "any farther bequests to make, my fair cousin?—It is time we were on our way."

"Only," said the Countess, making an effort to speak, "that you will be pleased to be favourable to this—this young gentleman."

"Umph!" said Crèvecœur, casting the same penetrating glance on Quentin which he had bestowed on Glover, but apparently with a much less satisfactory result, and mimicking, though not offensively, the embarrassment of the Countess—"Umph!—Ay,—this is a blade of another temper.—And pray, my cousin, what has this—this *very* young gentleman done, to deserve such intercession at your hands?"

"He has saved my life and honour," said the Countess, reddening with shame and resentment.

Quentin also blushed with indignation, but wisely concluded, that to give vent to it might only make matters worse.

"Life and honour?—Umph!" said again the Count Crèvecœur; methinks it would have been as well, my cousin, if you had not put yourself in the way of lying under such obligations to this very young gentleman.—But let it pass. The young gentleman may wait on us, if his quality permit, and I will see he has no injury—only I will myself take in future the office of protecting your life and honour, and may perhaps find for him some fitter duty than that of being a squire of the body to damosels errant."

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"My Lord Count," said Durward, unable to keep silence any longer, "lest you should talk of a stranger in slighter terms than you might afterwards think becoming, I take leave to tell you, that I am Quentin Durward, an Archer of the Scottish Body-guard, in which, as you well know, none but gentlemen and men of honour are enrolled."

"I thank you for your information, and I kiss your hands, Seignior Archer," said Crèvecœur, in the same tone of raillery. "Have the goodness to ride with me to the front of the party."

As Quentin moved onward at the command of the Count, who had now the power, if not the right, to dictate his motions, he observed that the Lady Isabelle followed his motions with a look of anxious and timid interest, which amounted almost to tenderness, and the sight of which brought water into his eyes. But he remembered that he had a man's part to sustain before Crèvecœur, who, perhaps, of all the chivalry in France or Burgundy, was the least likely to be moved to anything but laughter by a tale of true love sorrow. He determined, therefore, not to wait his addressing him, but to open the conversation in a tone which should assert his claim to fair treatment, and to more respect than the Count, offended perhaps at finding a person of such inferior note placed so near the confidence of his high-born and wealthy cousin, seemed disposed to entertain for him.

"My Lord Count of Crèvecœur," he said, in a temperate but firm tone of voice, "may I request of you, before our interview goes farther, to tell me if I am at liberty, or am to account myself your prisoner?"

"A shrewd question," replied the Count, "which at present I can only answer by another—Are France and Burgundy, think you, at peace or war with each other?"

"That," replied the Scot, "you, my lord, should certainly know better than I. I have been absent from the Court of France, and have heard no news for some time."

"Look you there," said the Count; "you see how easy it is to ask questions, but how difficult to answer them. Why, I myself, who have been at Peronne with the Duke for this week and better, cannot resolve this riddle any more than you; and yet, Sir Squire, upon the solution of that question depends the said point, whether you are prisoner or free man: and, for the present, I must hold you as the former—Only, if you have really

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and honestly been of service to my kinswoman, and if you are candid in your answers to the questions I shall ask, affairs shall stand the better with you."

"The Countess of Croye," said Quentin, "is best judge if I have rendered any service, and to her I refer you on that matter. My answers you will yourself judge of when you ask me your questions."

"Umph!—haughty enough," muttered the Count of Crèvecœur, "and very like one that wears a lady's favour in his hat, and thinks he must carry things with a high tone, to honour the precious remnant of silk and tinsel.—Well, sir, I trust it will be no abatement of your dignity, if you answer me, how long you have been about the person of the Lady Isabelle of Croye?"

"Count of Crèvecœur," said Quentin Durward, "if I answer questions which are asked in a tone approaching towards insult, it is only lest injurious inferences should be drawn from my silence respecting one to whom we are both obliged to render justice. I have acted as escort to the Lady Isabelle since she left France to retire into Flanders."

"Ho! ho!" said the Count; "and that is to say, since she fled from Plessis-les-Tours?—You, an Archer of the Scottish Guard, accompanied her, of course, by the express orders of King Louis?"

However little Quentin thought himself indebted to the King of France, who, in contriving the surprisal of the Countess Isabelle by William de la Marck, had probably calculated on the young Scotchman being slain in her defence, he did not yet conceive himself at liberty to betray any trust which Louis had reposed, or had seemed to repose, in him, and therefore replied to Count Crèvecœur's inference, "that it was sufficient for him to have the authority of his superior officer for what he had done, and he inquired no farther."

"It is quite sufficient," said the Count. "We know the King does not permit his officers to send the Archers of his Guard to prance like paladins by the bridle-rein of wandering ladies, unless he hath some politic purpose to serve. It will be difficult for King Louis to continue to aver so boldly, that he knew not of the Ladies of Croye's having escaped from France, since they were escorted by one of his own Life-guard.—And whither, Sir Archer, was your retreat directed?"

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"To Liege, my lord," answered the Scot; "where the ladies desired to be placed under the protection of the late Bishop."

"The *late* Bishop!" exclaimed the Count of Crèvecœur; "is Louis of Bourbon dead?—Not a word of his illness had reached the Duke—Of what did he die?"

"He sleeps in a bloody grave, my lord—that is, if his murderers have conferred one on his remains."

Murdered!" exclaimed Crèvecœur again—"Holy Mother of Heaven!—young man, it is impossible!"

"I saw the deed done with my own eyes, and many an act of horror besides."

"Saw it! and made not in to help the good Prelate!" exclaimed the Count; "or to raise the castle against his murderers?—Know'st thou not, that even to look on such a deed, without resisting it, is profane sacrilege?"

"To be brief, my lord," said Durward, "ere this act was done, the castle was stormed by the bloodthirsty William de la Marck, with help of the insurgent Liegeois."

"I am struck with thunder," said Crèvecœur. "Liege in insurrection!—Schonwaldt taken!—the Bishop murdered!—Messenger of sorrow, never did one man unfold such a packet of woes!—Speak—knew you of this assault—of this insurrection—of this murder?—Speak—thou art one of Louis's trusted Archers, and it is he that has aimed this painful arrow.—Speak, or I will have thee torn with wild horses!"

"And if I *am* so torn, my lord, there can be nothing rent out of me, that may not become a true Scottish gentleman. I know no more of these villanies than you,—was so far from being partaker in them, that I would have withstood them to the uttermost, had my means, in a twentieth degree, equalled my inclination. But what could I do?—they were hundreds, and I but one. My only care was to rescue the Countess Isabelle, and in that I was happily successful. Yet, had I been near enough when the ruffian deed was so cruelly done on the old man, I had saved his grey hairs, or I had avenged them; and as it was, my abhorrence was spoken loud enough to prevent other horrors."

"I believe thee, youth," said the Count; "thou art neither of an age nor nature to be trusted with such bloody work, however well fitted to be the squire of dames. But alas! for the kind and generous Prelate, to be murdered on the hearth where he so

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often entertained the stranger with Christian charity and princely bounty—and that by a wretch, a monster! a portentous growth of blood and cruelty!—bred up in the very hall where he has imbrued his hands in his benefactor's blood! But I know not Charles of Burgundy—nay, I should doubt of the justice of Heaven, if vengeance be not as sharp, and sudden, and severe, as this villany has been unexampled in atrocity. And, if no other shall pursue the murderer,"—Here he paused, grasped his sword, then, quitting his bridle, struck both gauntleted hands upon his breast, until his corselet clattered, and finally held them up to Heaven, as he solemnly continued—"I—I, Philip Crèvecœur of Cordès, make a vow to God, Saint Lambert, and the Three Kings of Cologne, that small shall be my thought of other earthly concerns, till I take full revenge on the murderers of the good Louis of Bourbon, whether I find them in forest or field, in city or in country, in hill or in plain, in King's Court, or in God's Church! and thereto I pledge lands and living, friends and followers, life and honour. So help me God, and Saint Lambert of Liege, and the Three Kings of Cologne!"

When the Count of Crèvecœur had made his vow, his mind seemed in some sort relieved from the overwhelming grief and astonishment with which he had heard the fatal tragedy that had been acted at Schonwaldt, and he proceeded to question Durward more minutely concerning the particulars of that disastrous affair, which the Scot, nowise desirous to abate the spirit of revenge which the Count entertained against William de la Marck, gave him at full length.

"But those blind, unsteady, faithless, fickle beasts, the Liegeois," said the Count, "that they should have combined themselves with this inexorable robber and murderer, to put to death their lawful Prince!"

Durward here informed the enraged Burgundian that the Liegeois, or at least the better class of them, however rashly they had run into the rebellion against their Bishop, had no design, so far as appeared to him, to aid in the execrable deed of De la Marck; but, on the contrary, would have prevented it if they had had the means, and were struck with horror when they beheld it.

"Speak not of the faithless, inconstant plebeian rabble!" said Crèvecœur. "When they took arms against a Prince, who had no fault, save that he was too kind and too good a master for

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such a set of ungrateful slaves—when they armed against him, and broke into his peaceful house, what could there be in their intention but murder?—when they banded themselves with the Wild Boar of Ardennes, the greatest homicide in the marches of Flanders, what else could there be in their purpose *but* murder, which is the very trade he lives by? And again, was it not one of their own vile rabble who did the very deed, by thine own account?—I hope to see their canals running blood by the light of their burning houses. Oh, the kind, noble, generous lord, whom they have slaughtered!—Other vassals have rebelled under the pressure of imposts and penury; but the men of Liege in the fulness of insolence and plenty."—He again abandoned the reins of his war-horse, and wrung bitterly the hands, which his mail-gloves rendered untractable. Quentin easily saw that the grief which he manifested was augmented by the bitter recollection of past intercourse and friendship with the sufferer, and was silent accordingly, respecting feelings which he was unwilling to aggravate, and at the same time felt it impossible to soothe.

But the Count of Crèvecœur returned again and again to the subject—questioned him on every particular of the surprise of Schonwaldt, and the death of the Bishop; and then suddenly, as if he had recollected something which had escaped his memory, demanded what had become of the Lady Hameline, and why she was not with her kinswoman? "Not," he added, contemptuously, "that I consider her absence as at all a loss to the Countess Isabelle; for, although she was her kinswoman, and upon the whole a well-meaning woman, yet the Court of Cocagne never produced such a fantastic fool; and I hold it for certain, that her niece, whom I have always observed to be a modest and orderly young lady, was led into the absurd frolic of flying from Burgundy to France, by that blundering, romantic, old, match-making and match-seeking idiot!"

What a speech for a romantic lover to hear! and to hear, too, when it would have been ridiculous in him to attempt what it was impossible for him to achieve,—namely, to convince the Count, by force of arms, that he did foul wrong to the Countess—the peerless in sense as in beauty—in terming her a modest and orderly young woman; qualities which might have been predicated with propriety of the daughter of a sunburnt peasant, who lived by goading the oxen, while her father

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held the plough. And then, to suppose her under the domination and supreme guidance of a silly and romantic aunt!—the slander should have been repelled down the slanderer's throat. But the open, though severe, physiognomy of the Count of Crèvecœur, the total contempt which he seemed to entertain for those feelings which were uppermost in Quentin's bosom, overawed him; not for fear of the Count's fame in arms—that was a risk which would have increased his desire of making out a challenge—but in dread of ridicule, the weapon of all others most feared by enthusiasts of every description, and which, from its predominance over such minds, often checks what is absurd, and fully as often smothers that which is noble.

Under the influence of this fear, of becoming an object of scorn rather than resentment, Durward, though with some pain, confined his reply to a confused account of the Lady Hameline having made her escape from Schonwaldt before the attack took place. He could not, indeed, have made his story very distinct, without throwing ridicule on the near relation of Isabelle, and perhaps incurring some himself, as having been the object of her preposterous expectations. He added to his embarrassed detail, that he had heard a report, though a vague one, of the Lady Hameline having again fallen into the hands of William de la Marck.

"I trust in Saint Lambert that he will marry her," said Crèvecœur; "as indeed, he is likely enough to do, for the sake of her money-bags; and equally likely to knock her on the head, so soon as these are either secured in his own grasp, or, at farthest, emptied."

The Count then proceeded to ask so many questions concerning the mode in which both ladies had conducted themselves on the journey, the degree of intimacy to which they admitted Quentin himself, and other trying particulars, that, vexed, and ashamed, and angry, the youth was scarce able to conceal his embarrassment from the keen-sighted soldier and courtier, who seemed suddenly disposed to take leave of him, saying, at the same time, "Umph—I see it is as I conjectured, on one side at least; I trust the other party has kept her senses better.—Come, Sir Squire, spur on, and keep the van, while I fall back to discourse with the Lady Isabelle. I think I have learned now so much from you, that I can talk to her of these sad passages without hurting her nicety, though I have fretted

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yours a little.—Yet stay, young gallant—one word ere you go. You have had, I imagine, a happy journey through Fairy-land —all full of heroic adventure, and high hope, and wild minstrel-like delusion, like the gardens of Morgaine la Fée. Forget it all, young soldier," he added, tapping him on the shoulder; "remember yonder lady only as the honoured Countess of Croye —forget her as a wandering and adventurous damsel: And her friends—one of them I can answer for—will remember, on their part, only the services you have done her, and forget the unreasonable reward which you have had the boldness to propose to yourself."

Enraged that he had been unable to conceal from the sharp-sighted Crèvecœur feelings which the Count seemed to consider as the object of ridicule, Quentin replied indignantly, "My Lord Count, when I require advice of you, I will ask it; when I demand assistance of you, it will be time enough to grant or refuse it; when I set peculiar value on your opinion of me, it will not be too late to express it."

"Heyday!" said the Count; "I have come between Amadis and Oriana, and must expect a challenge to the lists!"

"You speak as if that were an impossibility," said Quentin —"When I broke a lance with the Duke of Orleans, it was against a breast in which flowed better blood than that of Crèvecœur—When I measured swords with Dunois, I engaged a better warrior."

"Now Heaven nourish thy judgment, gentle youth," said Crèvecœur, still laughing at the chivalrous inamorato. "If thou speak'st truth, thou hast had singular luck in this world; and, truly, if it be the pleasure of Providence exposes thee to such trials, without a beard on thy lip, thou wilt be mad with vanity ere thou writest thyself man. Thou canst not move me to anger, though thou mayest to mirth. Believe me, though thou mayest have fought with Princes, and played the champion for Countesses, by some of those freaks which Fortune will sometimes exhibit, thou art by no means the equal of those of whom thou hast been either the casual opponent, or more casual companion. I can allow thee, like a youth who hath listened to romances till he fancied himself a Paladin, to form pretty dreams for some time; but thou must not be angry at a well-meaning friend, though he shake thee something roughly by the shoulders to awake thee."

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"My Lord of Crèvecœur," said Quentin, "my family"——

"Nay, it was not utterly of family that I spoke," said the Count; "but of rank, fortune, high station, and so forth, which place a distance between various degrees and classes of persons. As for birth, all men are descended from Adam and Eve."

"My Lord Count," repeated Quentin, "my ancestors, the Durwards of Glen-houlakin"——

"Nay," said the Count, "if you claim a farther descent for them than from Adam, I have done! Good even to you."

He reined back his horse, and paused to join the Countess, to whom, if possible, his insinuations and advices, however well meant, were still more disagreeable than to Quentin, who, as he rode on, muttered to himself, "Cold-blooded, insolent, overweening coxcomb!—Would that the next Scottish Archer who has his harquebuss pointed at thee, may not let thee off so easily as I did!"

In the evening they reached the town of Charleroi, on the Sambre, where the Count of Crèvecœur had determined to leave the Countess Isabelle, whom the terror and fatigue of yesterday, joined to a flight of fifty miles since morning, and the various distressing sensations by which it was accompanied, had made incapable of travelling farther, with safety to her health. The Count consigned her, in a state of great exhaustion, to the care of the Abbess of the Cistercian convent in Charleroi, a noble lady, to whom both the families of Crèvecœur and Croye were related, and in whose prudence and kindness he could repose confidence.

Crèvecœur himself only stopped to recommend the utmost caution to the governor of a small Burgundian garrison who occupied the place, and required him also to mount a guard of honour upon the convent during the residence of the Countess Isabelle of Croye,—ostensibly to secure her safety, but perhaps secretly to prevent her attempting to escape. The Count only assigned as a cause for the garrison being vigilant, some vague rumours which he had heard of disturbances in the Bishopric of Liege. But he was determined himself to be the first who should carry the formidable news of the insurrection and the murder of the Bishop, in all their horrible reality, to Duke Charles; and for that purpose, having procured fresh horses for himself and suite, he mounted with the resolution of con-

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tinuing his journey to Peronne without stopping for repose; and informing Quentin Durward that he must attend him, he made, at the same time, a mock apology for parting fair company, but hoped, that to so devoted a squire of dames a night's journey by moonshine would be more agreeable, than supinely to yield himself to slumber like an ordinary mortal.

Quentin, already sufficiently afflicted by finding that he was to be parted from Isabelle, longed to answer this taunt with an indignant defiance; but aware that the Count would only laugh at his anger, and despise his challenge, he resolved to wait some future time, when he might have an opportunity of obtaining some amends from this proud lord, who, though for very different reasons, had become nearly as odious to him as the Wild Boar of Ardennes himself. He therefore assented to Crèvecœur's proposal, as to what he had no choice of declining, and they pursued in company, and with all the despatch they could exert, the road between Charleroi and Peronne.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIFTH.

THE UNBIDDEN GUEST.

No human quality is so well wove
In warp and woof, but there's some flaw in it:
I've known a brave man fly a shepherd's cur,
A wise man so demean him, drivelling idiocy
Had well-nigh been ashamed on't. For your crafty,
Your worldly-wise man, he, above the rest,
Weaves his own snares so fine, he's often caught in them.

OLD PLAY.

QUENTIN, during the earlier part of the night journey, had to combat with that bitter heartache, which is felt when youth parts, and probably for ever, with her he loves. As, pressed by the urgency of the moment, and the impatience of Crèvecœur, they hasted on through the rich lowlands of Hainault, under the benign guidance of a rich and lustrous harvest-moon, she shed her yellow influence over rich and deep pastures, woodland, and corn-fields, from which the husbandmen were using her light to withdraw the grain, such was the industry of the

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Flemings, even at that period; she shone on broad, level, and fructifying rivers, where glided the white sail in the service of commerce, uninterrupted by rock or torrent, beside lively quiet villages, whose external decency and cleanliness expressed the ease and comfort of the inhabitants;—she gleamed upon the feudal castle of many a gallant Baron and Knight, with its deep moat, battlemented court, and high belfry,—for the chivalry of Hainault was renowned among the nobles of Europe;—and her light displayed at a distance, in its broad beam, the gigantic towers of more than one lofty minster.

Yet all this fair variety, however differing from the waste and wilderness of his own land, interrupted not the course of Quentin's regrets and sorrows. He had left his heart behind him when he departed from Charleroi; and the only reflection which the farther journey inspired was, that every step was carrying him farther from Isabelle. His imagination was taxed to recall every word she had spoken, every look she had directed towards him; and, as happens frequently in such cases, the impression made upon his imagination by the recollection of these particulars, was even stronger than the realities themselves had excited.

At length, after the cold hour of midnight was past, in spite alike of love and of sorrow, the extreme fatigue which Quentin had undergone the two preceding days began to have an effect on him, which his habits of exercise of every kind, and his singular alertness and activity of character, as well as the painful nature of the reflections which occupied his thoughts, had hitherto prevented his experiencing. The ideas of his mind began to be so little corrected by the exertions of his senses, worn out and deadened as the latter now were by extremity of fatigue, that the visions which the former drew superseded or perverted the information conveyed by the blunted organs of seeing and hearing; and Durward was only sensible that he was awake, by the exertions which, sensible of the peril of his situation, he occasionally made, to resist falling into a deep and dead sleep. Every now and then a strong consciousness of the risk of falling from or with his horse roused him to exertion and animation; but ere long his eyes again were dimmed by confused shades of all sorts of mingled colours, the moonlight landscape swam before them, and he was so much overcome with fatigue, that the Count of Crèvecœur, observing his condition, was at length

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compelled to order two of his attendants, one to each rein of Durward's bridle, in order to prevent the risk of his falling from his horse.

When at length they reached the town of Landrecy, the Count, in compassion to the youth, who had now been in a great measure without sleep for three nights, allowed himself and his retinue a halt of four hours, for rest and refreshment.

Deep and sound were Quentin's slumbers, until they were broken by the sound of the Count's trumpet, and the cry of his Fouriers and harbingers, "Debout! debout!—Ha! Messires, en route, en route!"—Yet, unwelcomely early as the tones came, they awaked him a different being in strength and spirits from what he had fallen asleep. Confidence in himself and his fortunes returned with his reviving spirits, and with the rising sun. He thought of his love no longer as a desperate and fantastic dream, but as a high and invigorating principle to be cherished in his bosom, although he might never propose to himself, under all the difficulties by which he was beset, to bring it to any prosperous issue.—"The pilot," he reflected, "steers his bark by the polar star, although he never expects to become possessor of it; and the thoughts of Isabelle of Croye shall make me a worthy man-at-arms, though I may never see her more. When she hears that a Scottish soldier, named Quentin Durward, distinguished himself in a well-fought field, or left his body on the breach of a disputed fortress, she will remember the companion of her journey, as one who did all in his power to avert the snares and misfortunes which beset it, and perhaps will honour his memory with a tear, his coffin with a garland."

In this manly mood of bearing his misfortune, Quentin felt himself more able to receive and reply to the jests of the Count of Crèvecœur, who passed several on his alleged effeminacy and incapacity of undergoing fatigue. The young Scot accommodated himself so good-humouredly to the Count's raillery, and replied at once so happily and so respectfully, that the change of his tone and manner made obviously a more favourable impression on the Count than he had entertained from his prisoner's conduct during the preceding evening, when, rendered irritable by the feelings of his situation, he was alternately moodily silent or fiercely argumentative.

The veteran soldier began at length to take notice of his

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young companion, as a pretty fellow, of whom something might be made; and more than hinted to him, that, would he but resign his situation in the Archer-Guard of France, he would undertake to have him enrolled in the household of the Duke of Burgundy in an honourable condition, and would himself take care of his advancement. And although Quentin, with suitable expressions of gratitude, declined this favour at present, until he should find out how far he had to complain of his original patron, King Louis, he, nevertheless, continued to remain on good terms with the Count of Crèvecœur; and, while his enthusiastic mode of thinking, and his foreign and idiomatical manner of expressing himself, often excited a smile on the grave cheek of the Count, that smile had lost all that it had of sarcastic and bitter, and did not exceed the limits of good humour and good manners.

Thus travelling on with much more harmony than on the preceding day, the little party came at last within two miles of the famous and strong town of Peronne, near which the Duke of Burgundy's army lay encamped, ready, as was supposed, to invade France; and, in opposition to which, Louis XI. had himself assembled a strong force near Saint Maxence, for the purpose of bringing to reason his over-powerful vassal.

Peronne, situated upon a deep river, in a flat country, and surrounded by strong bulwarks and profound moats, was accounted in ancient, as in modern times, one of the strongest fortresses in France.* The Count of Crèvecœur, his retinue, and his prisoner, were approaching the fortress about the third hour after noon; when, riding through the pleasant glades of a large forest, which then covered the approach to the town on the east side, they were met by two men of rank, as appeared from the number of their attendants, dressed in the habits worn in time of peace; and who, to judge from the falcons which they carried on their wrists, and the number of spaniels and greyhounds led by their followers, were engaged in the amusement of hawking. But on perceiving Crèvecœur, with whose appearance and liveries they were sufficiently intimate, they quitted the search which they were making for a

* Indeed, though lying on an exposed and warlike frontier, it was never taken by an enemy, but preserved the proud name of Peronne la Pucelle, until the Duke of Wellington, a great destroyer of that sort of reputation, took the place in the memorable advance upon Paris in 1815.

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heron along the banks of a long canal, and came galloping towards him.

"News, news, Count of Crèvecœur!" they cried both together; —"will you give news, or take news? or will you barter fairly?"

"I would barter fairly, Messires," said Crèvecœur, after saluting them courteously, "did I conceive you had any news of importance sufficient to make an equivalent for mine."

The two sportsmen smiled on each other; and the elder of the two, a fine baronial figure, with a dark countenance, marked with that sort of sadness which some physiognomists ascribe to a melancholy temperament, and some, as the Italian statuary augured of the visage of Charles I, consider as predicting an unhappy death,* turning to his companion, said, "Crèvecœur has been in Brabant, the country of commerce, and he has learned all its artifices—he will be too hard for us if we drive a bargain."

"Messires," said Crèvecœur, "the Duke ought in justice to have the first of my wares, as the Seigneur takes his toll before open market begins. But tell me, are your news of a sad or a pleasant complexion?"

The person whom he particularly addressed was a lively looking man, with an eye of great vivacity, which was corrected by an expression of reflection and gravity about the mouth and upper lip—the whole physiognomy marking a man who saw and judged rapidly, but was sage and slow in forming resolutions or in expressing opinions. This was the famous Knight of Hainault, son of Collart, or Nicolas de l'Elite, known in history, and amongst historians, by the venerable name of Philip des Comines, at this time close to the person of Duke Charles the Bold,† and one of his most esteemed counsellors. He answered Crèvecœur's question concerning the complexion of the news of which he and his companion, the Baron de Hymbercourt, were the depositaries.—"They were," he said, "like the colours of the rainbow, various in hue, as they might be viewed from different points, and placed against the black

* De Hymbercourt, or Imbercourt, was put to death by the inhabitants of Ghent, with the Chancellor of Burgundy, in the year 1477. Mary of Burgundy, daughter of Charles the Bold, appeared in mourning in the market-place, and with tears besought the life of her servants from her insurgent subjects, but in vain.

† Note L. Philip des Comines.

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cloud or the fair sky—Such a rainbow was never seen in France or Flanders, since that of Noah's ark."

"My tidings," replied Crèvecœur, "are altogether like the comet, gloomy, wild, and terrible in themselves, yet to be accounted the forerunners of still greater and more dreadful evils which are to ensue."

"We must open our bales," said Comines to his companion, "or our market will be forestalled by some new-comers, for ours are public news.—In one word, Crèvecœur—listen, and wonder—King Louis is at Péronné!"

"What!" said the Count, in astonishment; "has the Duke retreated without a battle? and do you remain here in your dress of peace, after the town is besieged by the French?—for I cannot suppose it taken."

"No, surely," said D'Hymbercourt, "the banners of Burgundy have not gone back a foot; and still King Louis is here."

"Then Edward of England must have come over the seas with his bowmen," said Crèvecœur, "and, like his ancestors, gained a second field of Poictiers?"

"Not so," said Comines—"Not a French banner has been borne down, not a sail spread from England—where Edward is too much amused among the wives of the citizens of London, to think of playing the Black Prince. Hear the extraordinary truth. You know, when you left us, that the conference between the commissioners on the parts of France and Burgundy was broken up, without much apparent chance of reconciliation."

"True; and we dreamt of nothing but war."

"What has followed has been indeed so like a dream," said Comines, "that I almost expect to awake, and find it so. Only one day since, the Duke had in council protested so furiously against farther delay, that it was resolved to send a defiance to the King, and march forward instantly into France. Toison d'Or, commissioned for the purpose, had put on his official dress, and had his foot in the stirrup to mount his horse, when lo! the French herald Mont-joie rode into our camp. We thought of nothing else than that Louis had been beforehand with our defiance; and began to consider how much the Duke would resent the advice, which had prevented him from being the first to declare war. But a council being speedily assembled,

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what was our wonder when the herald informed us, that Louis, King of France, was scarce an hour's riding behind, intending to visit Charles, Duke of Burgundy, with a small retinue, in order that their differences might be settled at a personal interview?"

"You surprise me, Messires," said Crèvecœur; "and yet you surprise me less than you might have expected; for, when I was last at Plessis-les-Tours, the all-trusted Cardinal Balue, offended with his master, and Burgundian at heart, did hint to me, that he could so work upon Louis's peculiar foibles, as to lead him to place himself in such a position with regard to Burgundy, that the Duke might have the terms of peace of his own making. But I never suspected that so old a fox as Louis could have been induced to come into the trap of his own accord. What said the Burgundian counsellors?"

"As you may guess," answered D'Hymbercourt; "talked much of faith to be observed, and little of advantage to be obtained by such a visit; while it was manifest they thought almost entirely of the last, and were only anxious to find some way to reconcile it with the necessary preservation of appearances."

"And what said the Duke?" continued the Count of Crèvecœur.

"Spoke brief and bold as usual," replied Comines. "'Which of you was it,' he asked, 'who witnessed the meeting of my cousin Louis and me after the battle of Montl'hery,* when I was so thoughtless as to accompany him back within the intrenchments of Paris with half-a-score of attendants, and so put my person at the King's mercy?' I replied, that most of us had been present; and none could ever forget the alarm which it had been his pleasure to give us. 'Well,' said the Duke, 'you blamed me for my folly, and I confessed to you that I had acted like a giddy-pated boy; and I am aware, too, that my father of happy memory being then alive, my kinsman, Louis, would have had less advantage by seizing on my person than I might now have by securing his. But, nevertheless, if my royal kinsman comes hither on the present occasion, in the same singleness of heart under which I then acted, he shall be royally welcome —If it is meant, by this appearance of confidence, to circumvent and to blind me, till he execute some of his politic schemes, by

* Note M. Meeting of Louis and Charles.

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Saint George of Burgundy, let him look to it!' And so, having turned up his mustaches, and stamped on the ground, he ordered us all to get on our horses, and receive so extraordinary a guest."

"And you met the King accordingly?" replied the Count of Crèvecœur—"Miracles have not ceased!—How was he accompanied?"

"As slightly as might be," answered D'Hymbercourt; "only a score or two of the Scottish Guard, and a few knights and gentlemen of his household—among whom his astrologer, Galeotti, made the gayest figure."

"That fellow," said Crèvecœur, "holds some dependence on the Cardinal Balue—I should not be surprised that he has had his share in determining the King to this step of doubtful policy. Any nobility of higher rank?"

"There are Monsieur of Orleans, and Dunois," replied Comines.

"I will have a rouse with Dunois," said Crèvecœur, "wag the world as it will. But we heard that both he and the Duke had fallen into disgrace, and were in prison."

"They were both under arrest in the Castle of Loches, that delightful place of retirement for the French nobility," said D'Hymbercourt; "but Louis has released them, in order to bring them with him—perhaps because he cared not to leave Orleans behind. For his other attendants, faith, I think his gossip, the Hangman Marshal, with two or three of his retinue, and Oliver, his barber, may be the most considerable—and the whole bevy so poorly arrayed, that, by my honour, the King resembles most an old usurer, going to collect desperate debts, attended by a body of catchpolls."

"And where is he lodged?" said Crèvecœur.

"Nay, that," replied Comines, "is the most marvellous of all. Our Duke offered to let the King's Archer Guard have a gate of the town, and a bridge of boats over the Somme, and to have assigned to Louis himself the adjoining house, belonging to a wealthy burgess, Giles Orthen; but, in going thither, the King espied the banners of De Lau and Pencil de Rivière, whom he had banished from France; and scared, as it would seem, with the thought of lodging so near refugees and malcontents of his own making, he craved to be quartered in the Castle of Peronne, and *there* he hath his abode accordingly."

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"Why, God ha' mercy!" exclaimed Crèvecœur, "this is not only not being content with venturing into the lion's den, but thrusting his head into his very jaws—Nothing less than the very bottom of the rat-trap would serve the crafty old politician!"

"Nay," said Comines, "D'Hymbercourt hath not told you the speech of Le Glorieux*—which, in my mind, was the shrewdest opinion that was given."

"And what said *his* most illustrious wisdom?" asked the Count.

"As the Duke," replied Comines, "was hastily ordering some vessels and ornaments of plate, and the like, to be prepared as presents for the King and his retinue, by way of welcome on his arrival, 'Trouble not thy small brain about it, my friend Charles,' said Le Glorieux, 'I will give thy cousin Louis a nobler and a fitter gift than thou canst; and that is my cap and bells, and my bauble to boot; for, by the mass, he is a greater fool than I am, for putting himself in thy power.'—'But if I give him no reason to repent it, sirrah, how then?' said the Duke. 'Then, truly, Charles, thou shalt have cap and bauble thyself, as the greatest fool of the three of us.' I promise you this knavish quip touched the Duke closely—I saw him change colour and bite his lip.—And now, our news are told, noble Crèvecœur, and what think you they resemble?"

"A mine full charged with gunpowder," answered Crèvecœur, "to which, I fear, it is my fate to bring the kindled linstock. Your news and mine are like flax and fire, which cannot meet without bursting into flame, or like certain chemical substances which cannot be mingled without an explosion. Friends—gentlemen—ride close by my rein; and when I tell you what has chanced in the bishopric of Liege, I think you will be of opinion, that King Louis might as safely have undertaken a pilgrimage to the infernal regions, as this ill-timed visit to Peronne."

The two nobles drew up close on either hand of the Count, and listened, with half-suppressed exclamations, and gestures of the deepest wonder and interest, to his account of the transactions at Liege and Schonwaldt. Quentin was then called forward, and examined and re-examined on the particulars of the Bishop's death, until at length he refused to answer any farther interrogatories, not knowing wherefore they were asked, or what use might be made of his replies.

* The jester of Charles of Burgundy, of whom more hereafter.

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They now reached the rich and level banks of the Somme, and the ancient walls of the little town of Peronne la Pucelle, and the deep green meadows adjoining, now whitened with the numerous tents of the Duke of Burgundy's army, amounting to about fifteen thousand men.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIXTH.

THE INTERVIEW.

When Princes meet, Astrologers may mark it
An ominous conjunction, full of boding,
Like that of Mars with Saturn.

OLD PLAY.

ONE hardly knows whether to term it a privilege or a penalty annexed to the quality of princes, that, in their intercourse with each other, they are required, by the respect which is due to their own rank and dignity, to regulate their feelings and expressions by a severe etiquette, which precludes all violent and avowed display of passion, and which, but that the whole world are aware that this assumed complaisance is a matter of ceremony, might justly pass for profound dissimulation. It is no less certain, however, that the overstepping of these bounds of ceremonial, for the purpose of giving more direct vent to their angry passions, has the effect of compromising their dignity with the world in general; as was particularly noted when those distinguished rivals, Francis the First, and the Emperor Charles, gave each other the lie direct, and were desirous of deciding their differences hand to hand, in single combat.

Charles of Burgundy, the most hasty and impatient, nay, the most imprudent prince of his time, found himself, nevertheless, fettered within the magic circle which prescribed the most profound deference to Louis, as his Suzerain and liege Lord, who had deigned to confer upon him, a vassal of the crown, the distinguished honour of a personal visit. Dressed in his ducal mantle, and attended by his great officers, and principal knights and nobles, he went in gallant cavalcade to receive Louis XI. His retinue absolutely blazed with gold and silver; for the wealth

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of the Court of England being exhausted by the wars of York and Lancaster, and the expenditure of France limited by the economy of the Sovereign, that of Burgundy was for the time the most magnificent in Europe. The *cortège* of Louis, on the contrary, was few in number, and comparatively mean in appearance, and the exterior of the King himself, in a threadbare cloak, with his wonted old high-crowned hat stuck full of images, rendered the contrast yet more striking; and as the Duke, richly attired with the coronet and mantle of state, threw himself from his noble charger, and, kneeling on one knee, offered to hold the stirrup while Louis dismounted from his little ambling palfrey, the effect was almost grotesque.

The greeting between the two potentates was, of course, as full of affected kindness and compliment as it was totally devoid of sincerity. But the temper of the Duke rendered it much more difficult for him to preserve the necessary appearances in voice, speech, and demeanour; while in the King, every species of simulation and dissimulation seemed so much a part of his nature, that those best acquainted with him could not have distinguished what was feigned from what was real.

Perhaps the most accurate illustration, were it not unworthy two such high potentates, would be, to suppose the King in the situation of a stranger, perfectly acquainted with the habits and dispositions of the canine race, who, for some purpose of his own, is desirous to make friends with a large and surly mastiff, that holds him in suspicion, and is disposed to worry him on the first symptoms either of diffidence or of umbrage. The mastiff growls internally, erects his bristles, shows his teeth, yet is ashamed to fly upon the intruder, who seems at the same time so kind and so confiding, and therefore the animal endures advances which are far from pacifying him, watching, at the same time, the slightest opportunity which may justify him in his own eyes for seizing his friend by the throat.

The King was no doubt sensible, from the altered voice, constrained manner, and abrupt gestures of the Duke, that the game he had to play was delicate, and perhaps he more than once repented having ever taken it in hand. But repentance was too late, and all that remained for him was that inimitable dexterity of management, which the King understood equally at least with any man that ever lived.

The demeanour which Louis used towards the Duke was such

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as to resemble the kind overflowing of the heart in a moment of sincere reconciliation with an honoured and tried friend, from whom he had been estranged by temporary circumstances now passed away, and forgotten as soon as removed. The King blamed himself for not having sooner taken the decisive step of convincing his kind and good kinsman by such a mark of confidence as he was now bestowing, that the angry passages which had occurred betwixt them were nothing in his remembrance, when weighed against the kindness which received him when an exile from France, and under the displeasure of the King his father. He spoke of the Good Duke of Burgundy, as Philip the father of Duke Charles was currently called, and remembered a thousand instances of his paternal kindness.

"I think, cousin," he said, "your father made little difference in his affection betwixt you and me; for I remember when by an accident I had bewildered myself in a hunting party, I found the good Duke upbraiding you with leaving me in the forest, as if you had been careless of the safety of an elder brother."

The Duke of Burgundy's features were naturally harsh and severe; and when he attempted to smile, in polite acquiescence to the truth of what the King told him, the grimace which he made was truly diabolical.

"Prince of dissemblers," he said in his secret soul, "would that it stood with my honour to remind you *how* you have requited all the benefits of our House!"

"And then," continued the King, "if the ties of consanguinity and gratitude are not sufficient to bind us together, my fair cousin, we have those of spiritual relationship; for I am godfather to your fair daughter Mary, who is as dear to me as one of my own maidens; and when the Saints (their holy name be blessed!) sent me a little blossom, which withered in the course of three months, it was your princely father who held it at the font, and celebrated the ceremony of baptism, with richer and prouder magnificence than Paris itself could have afforded. Never shall I forget the deep, the indelible impression which the generosity of Duke Philip, and yours, my dearest cousin, made upon the half-broken heart of the poor exile!"

"Your Majesty," said the Duke, compelling himself to make some reply, "acknowledged that slight obligation in terms which overpaid all the display which Burgundy could make, to show due sense of the honour you had done its Sovereign."

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"I remember the words you mean, fair cousin, said the King, smiling; "I think they were, that in guerdon of the benefit of that day, I, poor wanderer, had nothing to offer, save the persons of myself, of my wife, and of my child.—Well, and I think I have indifferently well redeemed my pledge."

"I mean not to dispute what your Majesty is pleased to aver," said the Duke; "but"——

"But you ask," said the king, interrupting him, "how my actions have accorded with my words—Marry thus: the body of my infant child Joachim rests in Burgundian earth—my own person I have this morning placed unreservedly in your power—and, for that of my wife,—truly, cousin, I think, considering the period of time which has passed, you will scarce insist on my keeping my word in that particular. She was born on the Day of the Blessed Annunciation" (he crossed himself, and muttered an *Ora pro nobis*), "some fifty years since; but she is no farther distant than Rheims, and if you insist on my promise being fulfilled to the letter, she shall presently wait your pleasure."

Angry as the Duke of Burgundy was, at the barefaced attempt of the King to assume towards him a tone of friendship and intimacy, he could not help laughing at the whimsical reply of that singular monarch, and his laugh was as discordant as the abrupt tones of passion in which he often spoke. Having laughed longer and louder than was at that period, or would now be, thought fitting the time and occasion, he answered in the same tone, bluntly declining the honour of the Queen's company, but stating his willingness to accept that of the King's eldest daughter, whose beauty was celebrated.

"I am happy, fair cousin," said the King, with one of those dubious smiles of which he frequently made use, "that your gracious pleasure has not fixed on my younger daughter Joan. I should otherwise have had spear-breaking between you and my cousin of Orleans; and, had harm come of it, I must on either side have lost a kind friend and affectionate cousin."

"Nay, nay, my royal sovereign," said Duke Charles, "the Duke of Orleans shall have no interruption from me in the path which he has chosen *par amours*. The cause in which I couch my lance against Orleans, must be fair and straight."

Louis was far from taking amiss this brutal allusion to the personal deformity of the Princess Joan. On the contrary, he

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was rather pleased to find, that the Duke was content to be amused with broad jests, in which he was himself a proficient, and which (according to the modern phrase) spared much sentimental hypocrisy. Accordingly, he speedily placed their intercourse on such a footing, that Charles, though he felt it impossible to play the part of an affectionate and reconciled friend to a monarch whose ill offices he had so often encountered, and whose sincerity on the present occasion he so strongly doubted, yet had no difficulty in acting the hearty landlord towards a facetious guest; and so the want of reciprocity in kinder feelings between them, was supplied by the tone of good fellowship which exists between two boon companions,—a tone natural to the Duke from the frankness, and, it might be added, the grossness of his character, and to Louis, because, though capable of assuming any mood of social intercourse, that which really suited him best was mingled with grossness of ideas, and of caustic humour in expression.

Both Princes were happily able to preserve, during the period of a banquet at the town-house of Peronne, the same kind of conversation, on which they met as on a neutral ground, and which, as Louis easily perceived, was more available than any other to keep the Duke of Burgundy in that state of composure which seemed necessary to his own safety.

Yet he was alarmed to observe, that the Duke had around him several of those French nobles, and those of the highest rank, and in situations of great trust and power, whom his own severity or injustice had driven into exile; and it was to secure himself from the possible effects of their resentment and revenge, that (as already mentioned) he requested to be lodged in the Castle or Citadel of Peronne, rather than in the town itself.* This was readily granted by Duke Charles, with one of those grim smiles, of which it was impossible to say whether it meant good or harm to the party whom it concerned.

But when the King, expressing himself with as much delicacy as he could, and in the manner he thought best qualified to lull suspicion asleep, asked, whether the Scottish Archers of his Guard might not maintain the custody of the Castle of Peronne during his residence there, in lieu of the gate of the town which the Duke had offered to their care, Charles replied, with his wonted sternness of voice, and abruptness of manner, rendered

* Note N. Castle of Peronne.

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more alarming by his habit when he spoke, of either turning up his mustaches, or handling his sword or dagger, the last of which he used frequently to draw a little way, and then return to the sheath,*—"Saint Martin! No, my liege. You are in your vassal's camp and city—so men call me in respect to your Majesty—my castle and town are yours, and my men are yours; so it is indifferent whether my men-at-arms or the Scottish Archers guard either the outer gate or defences of the Castle.—No, by Saint George! Peronne is a virgin fortress—she shall not lose her reputation by any neglect of mine. Maidens must be carefully watched, my royal cousin, if we would have them continue to live in good fame."

"Surely, fair cousin, and I altogether agree with you," said the King, "I being in fact more interested in the reputation of the good little town than you are—Peronne being, as you know, fair cousin, one of those upon the same river Somme, which, pledged to your father of happy memory for redemption of money, are liable to be redeemed upon repayment. And, to speak truth, coming, like an honest debtor, disposed to clear off my obligations of every kind, I have brought here a few sumpter mules loaded with silver for the redemption—enough to maintain even your princely and royal establishment, fair cousin, for the space of three years."

"I will not receive a penny of it," said the Duke, twirling his mustaches; "the day of redemption is past, my royal cousin; nor was there ever serious purpose that the right should be exercised, the cession of these towns being the sole recompense my father ever received from France, when, in a happy hour for your family, he consented to forget the murder of my grandfather, and to exchange the alliance of England for that of your father. Saint George! if he had not so acted, your royal self, far from having towns on the Somme, could scarce have kept those beyond the Loire. No—I will not render a stone of them, were I to receive for every stone so rendered its weight in gold. I thank God, and the wisdom and valour of my ancestors, that the revenues of Burgundy, though it be but a duchy, will maintain my state, even when a King is my guest, without obliging me to barter my heritage."

"Well, fair cousin," answered the King, with the same mild

* This gesture, very indicative of a fierce character, is also by stage-tradition a distinction of Shakspeare's Richard III.

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and placid manner as before, and unperturbed by the loud tone and violent gestures of the Duke, "I see that you are so good a friend to France, that you are unwilling to part with aught that belongs to her. But we shall need some moderator in these affairs when we come to treat of them in council—What say you to Saint Paul?"

"Neither Saint Paul, nor Saint Peter, nor e'er a Saint in the Calendar," said the Duke of Burgundy, "shall preach me out of the possession of Peronne."

"Nay, but you mistake me," said King Louis, smiling; "I mean Louis de Luxembourg, our trusty constable, the Count of Saint Paul.—Ah! Saint Mary of Embrun! we lack but his head at our conference! the best head in France, and the most useful to the restoration of perfect harmony betwixt us."

"By Saint George of Burgundy!" said the Duke, "I marvel to hear your Majesty talk thus of a man, false and perjured, both to France and Burgundy—one, who hath ever endeavoured to fan into a flame our frequent differences, and that with the purpose of giving himself the airs of a mediator. I swear by the Order I wear, that his marshes shall not be long a resource for him!"

"Be not so warm, cousin," said the King, smiling, and speaking under his breath; "when I wished for the Constable's *head*, as a means of ending the settlement of our trifling differences, I had no desire for his *body*, which might remain at Saint Quentin's with much convenience."

"Ho! ho! I take your meaning, my royal cousin," said Charles, with the same dissonant laugh which some other of the King's coarse pleasantries had extorted; and added, stamping his heel on the ground, "I allow, in that sense, the head of the Constable *might* be useful at Peronne."

These, and other discourses, by which the King mixed hints at serious affairs amid matters of mirth and amusement, did not follow each other consecutively; but were adroitly introduced during the time of the banquet at the Hôtel de Ville, during a subsequent interview in the Duke's own apartments, and, in short, as occasion seemed to render the introduction of such delicate subjects easy and natural.

Indeed, however rashly Louis had placed himself in a risk, which the Duke's fiery temper, and the mutual subjects of exasperated enmity which subsisted betwixt them rendered of doubt-

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ful and perilous issue, never pilot on an unknown coast conducted himself with more firmness and prudence. He seemed to sound with the utmost address and precision the depths and shallows of his rival's mind and temper, and manifested neither doubt nor fear when the result of his experiments discovered much more of sunken rocks and of dangerous shoals than of safe anchorage.

At length a day closed, which must have been a wearisome one to Louis, from the constant exertion, vigilance, precaution, and attention, which his situation required, as it was a day of constraint to the Duke, from the necessity of suppressing the violent feelings to which he was in the general habit of giving uncontrolled vent.

No sooner had the latter retired into his own apartment, after he had taken a formal leave of the King for the night, than he gave way to the explosions of passion which he had so long suppressed; and many an oath and abusive epithet, as his jester Le Glorieux said, "fell that night upon heads which they were never coined for," his domestics reaping the benefit of that hoard of injurious language which he could not in decency bestow on his royal guest, even in his absence, and which was yet become too great to be altogether suppressed. The jests of the clown had some effect in tranquillising the Duke's angry mood;—he laughed loudly, threw the jester a piece of gold, caused himself to be disrobed in tranquillity, swallowed a deep cup of wine and spices, went to bed, and slept soundly.

The *couchée* of King Louis is more worthy of notice than that of Charles; for the violent expression of exasperated and headlong passion, as indeed it belongs more to the brutal than the intelligent part of our nature, has little to interest us, in comparison to the deep workings of a vigorous and powerful mind.

Louis was escorted to the lodgings he had chosen in the Castle or Citadel of Peronne by the chamberlains and harbingers of the Duke of Burgundy, and received at the entrance by a strong guard of archers and men-at-arms.

As he descended from his horse to cross the drawbridge, over a moat of unusual width and depth, he looked on the sentinels, and observed to Comines, who accompanied him, with other Burgundian nobles, "They wear Saint Andrew's crosses—but not those of my Scottish Archers."

"You will find them as ready to die in your defence, Sire," said the Burgundian, whose sagacious ear had detected in the

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King's tone of speech a feeling, which doubtless Louis would have concealed if he could. "They wear the Saint Andrew's Cross as the appendage of the collar of the Golden Fleece, my master the Duke of Burgundy's Order."

"Do I not know it?" said Louis, showing the collar which he himself wore in compliment to his host; "it is one of the dear bonds of fraternity which exist between my kind brother and myself. We are brothers in chivalry as in spiritual relationship; cousins by birth, and friends by every tie of kind feeling and good neighbourhood.—No farther than the base-court, my noble lords and gentlemen! I can permit your attendance no farther—you have done me enough of grace."

"We were charged by the Duke," said D'Hymbercourt, "to bring your Majesty to your lodging.—We trust your Majesty will permit us to obey our master's command."

"In this small matter," said the King, "I trust you will allow my command to outweigh his, even with you his liege subjects.—I am something indisposed, my lords—something fatigued. Great pleasure hath its toils, as well as great pain. I trust to enjoy your society better to-morrow.—And yours too, Seignior Philip of Comines—I am told you are the annalist of the time—we that desire to have a name in history must speak you fair, for men say your pen hath a sharp point when you will. —Good-night, my lords and gentles, to all and each of you."

The Lords of Burgundy retired, much pleased with the grace of Louis's manner, and the artful distribution of his attentions; and the King was left with only one or two of his own personal followers, under the archway of the base-court of the Castle of Peronne, looking on the huge tower which occupied one of the angles, being, in fact, the Donjon, or principal Keep of the palace. This tall, dark, massive building was seen clearly by the same moon which was lighting Quentin Durward betwixt Charleroi and Peronne, which, as the reader is aware, shone with peculiar lustre. The great Keep was in form nearly resembling the White Tower in the Citadel of London, but still more ancient in its architecture, deriving its date, as was affirmed, from the days of Charlemagne. The walls were of a tremendous thickness, the windows very small, and grated with bars of iron, and the huge clumsy bulk of the building cast a dark and portentous shadow over the whole of the courtyard.

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"I am not to be lodged *there*," the King said, with a shudder, that had something in it ominous.

"No," replied the grey-headed seneschal, who attended upon him unbonneted—"God forbid!—Your Majesty's apartments are prepared in these lower buildings which are hard by, and in which King John slept two nights before the battle of Poictiers."

"Hum—that is no lucky omen neither," muttered the King; "but what of the Tower, my old friend? and why should you desire of Heaven that I may not be there lodged?"

"Nay, my gracious liege," said the seneschal, "I know no evil of the Tower at all—only that the sentinels say lights are seen, and strange noises heard in it at night; and there are reasons why that may be the case, for anciently it was used as a state prison, and there are many tales of deeds which have been done in it."

Louis asked no farther questions; for no man was more bound than he to respect the secrets of a prison-house. At the door of the apartments destined for his use, which, though of later date than the Tower, were still both ancient and gloomy, stood a small party of the Scottish Guard, which the Duke, although he declined to concede the point to Louis, had ordered to be introduced, so as to be near the person of their master. The faithful Lord Crawford was at their head.

"Crawford—my honest and faithful Crawford," said the King, "where hast thou been to-day?—Are the Lords of Burgundy so inhospitable as to neglect one of the bravest and most noble gentlemen that ever trod a court?—I saw you not at the banquet."

"I declined it, my liege," said Crawford—"times are changed with me. The day has been that I could have ventured a carouse with the best man in Burgundy, and that in the juice of his own grape; but a matter of four pints now flusters me, and I think it concerns your Majesty's service to set in this an example to my callants."

"Thou art ever prudent," said the King; "but surely your toll is the less when you have so few men to command?—and a time of festivity requires not so severe self-denial on your part as a time of danger."

"If I have few men to command," said Crawford, "I have the more need to keep the knaves in fitting condition; and whether

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this business be like to end in feasting or fighting, God and your Majesty know better than old John of Crawford."

"You surely do not apprehend any danger?" said the King hastily, yet in a whisper.

"Not I," answered Crawford; "I wish I did; for, as old Earl Tineman* used to say, apprehended dangers may be always defended dangers.—The word for the night, if your Majesty pleases?"

"Let it be Burgundy, in honour of our host and of a liquor that you love, Crawford."

"I will quarrel with neither Duke nor drink, so called," said Crawford, "provided always that both be sound. A good night to your Majesty!"

"A good night, my trusty Scot," said the King, and passed on to his apartments.

"At the door of his bedroom Le Balafré was placed sentinel. "Follow me hither," said the King, as he passed him; and the Archer accordingly, like a piece of machinery put into motion by an artist, strode after him into the apartment, and remained there fixed, silent, and motionless, attending the royal command.

"Have you heard from that wandering Paladin, your nephew?" said the King; "for he hath been lost to us, since, like a young knight who had set out upon his first adventures, he sent us home two prisoners, as the first fruits of his chivalry."

"My lord, I heard something of that," said Balafré; "and I hope your Majesty will believe, that if he acted wrongfully, it was in no shape by my precept or example, since I never was so bold as to unhorse any of your Majesty's most illustrious house, better knowing my own condition, and"——

"Be silent on that point," said the King: "your nephew did his duty in the matter."

"There indeed," continued Balafré, "he had the cue from me.—'Quentin,' said I to him, 'whatever comes of it, remember you belong to the Scottish Archer-Guard, and do your duty whatever comes on't.'"

"I guess he had some such exquisite instructor," said Louis; "but it concerns me that you answer me my first question—Have you heard of your nephew of late?—Stand aback, my masters," he added, addressing the gentlemen of his chamber, "for this concerneth no ears but mine."

* An Earl of Douglas, so called.

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"Surely, please your Majesty," said Balafré; "I have seen this very evening the groom Charlot, whom my kinsman despatched from Liege, or some castle of the Bishop's which is near it, and where he hath lodged the Ladies of Croye in safety."

"Now our Lady of Heaven be praised for it!" said the King. "Art thou sure of it?—sure of the good news?"

"As sure as I can be of aught," said Le Balafré; "the fellow, I think, hath letters for your Majesty from the Ladies of Croye."

"Haste to get them," said the King—"Give the harquebuss to one of these knaves—to Oliver—to any one.—Now our Lady of Embrun be praised! and silver shall be the screen that surrounds her high altar!"

Louis, in this fit of gratitude and devotion, doffed, as usual, his hat, selected from the figures with which it was garnished that which represented his favourite image of the Virgin, placed it on a table, and, kneeling down, repeated reverently the vow he had made.

The groom, being the first messenger whom Durward had despatched from Schonwaldt, was now introduced with his letters. They were addressed to the King by the Ladies of Croye, and barely thanked him in very cold terms for his courtesy while at his Court, and something more warmly, for having permitted them to retire, and sent them in safety from his dominions; expressions at which Louis laughed very heartily, instead of resenting them. He then demanded of Charlot, with obvious interest, whether they had not sustained some alarm or attack upon the road? Charlot, a stupid fellow, and selected for that quality, gave a very confused account of the affray in which his companion, the Gascon, had been killed, but knew of no other. Again Louis demanded of him, minutely and particularly, the route which the party had taken to Liege; and seemed much interested when he was informed, in reply, that they had, upon approaching Namur, kept the more direct road to Liege, upon the right bank of the Maes, instead of the left bank, as recommended in their route. The King then ordered the man a small present, and dismissed him, disguising the anxiety he had expressed, as if it only concerned the safety of the Ladies of Croye.

Yet the news, though they implied the failure of one of his

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own favourite plans, seemed to imply more internal satisfaction on the King's part than he would have probably indicated in a case of brilliant success. He sighed like one whose breast has been relieved from a heavy burden, muttered his devotional acknowledgments with an air of deep sanctity, raised up his eyes, and hastened to adjust newer and surer schemes of ambition.

With such purpose, Louis ordered the attendance of his astrologer, Martius Galeotti, who appeared with his usual air of assumed dignity, yet not without a shade of uncertainty on his brow, as if he had doubted the King's kind reception. It was, however, favourable, even beyond the warmest which he had ever met with at any former interview. Louis termed him his friend, his father in the sciences—the glass by which a king should look into distant futurity—and concluded by thrusting on his finger a ring of very considerable value. Galeotti, not aware of the circumstances which had thus suddenly raised his character in the estimation of Louis, yet understood his own profession too well to let that ignorance be seen. He received with grave modesty the praises of Louis, which he contended were only due to the nobleness of the science which he practised, a science the rather the more deserving of admiration on account of its working miracles through means of so feeble an agent as himself; and he and the King took leave, for once much satisfied with each other.

On the astrologer's departure, Louis threw himself into a chair, and appearing much exhausted, dismissed the rest of his attendants, excepting Oliver alone, who, creeping around with gentle assiduity and noiseless step, assisted him in the task of preparing for repose.

While he received this assistance, the King, unlike to his wont, was so silent and passive, that his attendant was struck by the unusual change in his deportment. The worst minds have often something of good principle in them—banditti show fidelity to their captain, and sometimes a protected and promoted favourite has felt a gleam of sincere interest in the monarch to whom he owed his greatness. Oliver le Diable, le Mauvais (or by whatever other name he was called expressive of his evil propensities), was, nevertheless, scarcely so completely identified with Satan as not to feel some touch of grateful feeling for his master in this singular condition, when, as it seemed, his fate

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was deeply interested and his strength seemed to be exhausted. After for a short time rendering to the King in silence the usual services paid by a servant to his master at the toilette, the attendant was at length tempted to say, with the freedom which his Sovereign's indulgence had permitted him in such circumstances, "*Tête dieu*, Sire, you seem as if you had lost a battle; and yet I, who was near your Majesty during this whole day, never knew you fight a field so gallantly."

"A field!" said King Louis, looking up, and assuming his wonted causticity of tone and manner; "*Pasques-dieu*, my friend Oliver, say I have kept the arena in a bull-fight; for a blinder, and more stubborn, untameable, uncontrollable brute, than our cousin of Burgundy, never existed, save in the shape of a Murcian bull, trained for the bull-feasts.—Well, let it pass—I dodged him bravely. But, Oliver, rejoice with me that my plans in Flanders have not taken effect, whether as concerning those two rambling Princesses of Croye, or in Liege—you understand me?"

"In faith, I do not, Sire," replied Oliver; "it is impossible for me to congratulate your Majesty on the failure of your favourite schemes, unless you tell me some reason for the change in your own wishes and views."

"Nay," answered the King, "there is no change in either, in a general view. But, *Pasques-dieu*, my friend, I have this day learned more of Duke Charles than I before knew. When he was Count de Charalois, in the time of the old Duke Philip and the banished Dauphin of France, we drank, and hunted, and rambled together—and many a wild adventure we have had. And in those days I had a decided advantage over him—like that which a strong spirit naturally assumes over a weak one. But he has since changed—has become a dogged, daring, assuming, disputatious dogmatist, who nourishes an obvious wish to drive matters to extremities, while he thinks he has the game in his own hands. I was compelled to glide as gently away from each offensive topic, as if I touched red-hot iron. I did but hint at the possibility of those erratic Countesses of Croye, ere they attained Liege (for thither I frankly confessed that, to the best of my belief, they were gone), falling into the hands of some wild snapper upon the frontiers, and, *Pasques-dieu!* you would have thought I had spoken of sacrilege. It is needless to tell you what he said, and quite enough to say, that I would have held my head's safety very insecure, if, in that moment, accounts

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had been brought of the success of thy friend, William with the Beard, in his and thy honest scheme of bettering himself by marriage."

"No friend of *mine*, if it please your Majesty," said Oliver—"neither friend nor plan of mine."

"True, Oliver," answered the King; "thy plan had not been to wed, but to shave such a bridegroom. Well, thou didst wish her as bad a one, when thou didst modestly hint at thyself. However, Oliver, lucky the man who has her not; for hang, draw, and quarter, were the most gentle words which my gentle cousin spoke of him who should wed the young Countess, his vassal, without his most ducal permission."

"And he is, doubtless, as jealous of any disturbances in the good town of Liegé?" asked the favourite.

"As much, or much more so," replied the King, "as your understanding may easily anticipate; but, ever since I resolved on coming hither, my messengers have been in Liege, to repress, for the present, every movement to insurrection; and my very busy and bustling friends, Rouslaer and Pavillon, have orders to be quiet as a mouse until this happy meeting between my cousin and me is over."

"Judging, then, from your Majesty's account," said Oliver, drily, "the utmost to be hoped from this meeting is, that it should not make your condition worse?—Surely this is like the crane that thrust her head into the fox's mouth, and was glad to thank her good fortune that it was not bitten off. Yet your Majesty seemed deeply obliged even now to the sage philosopher who encouraged you to play so hopeful a game."

"No game," said the King, sharply, "is to be despaired of until it is lost, and that I have no reason to expect it will be in my own case. On the contrary, if nothing occurs to stir the rage of this vindictive madman, I am sure of victory; and surely, I am not a little obliged to the skill which selected for my agent, as the conductor of the Ladies of Croye, a youth whose horoscope so far corresponded with mine, that he hath saved me from danger, even by the disobedience of my own commands, and taking the route which avoided De la Marck's ambuscade."

"Your Majesty," said Oliver, "may find many agents who will serve you on the terms of acting rather after their own pleasure than your instructions."

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"Nay, nay, Oliver," said Louis, impatiently, "the heathen poet speaks of *Vota diis exaudita malignis*,—wishes, that is, which the saints grant to us in their wrath; and such, in the circumstances, would have been the success of William de la Marck's exploit, had it taken place about this time, and while I am in the power of this Duke of Burgundy.—And this my own art foresaw—fortified by that of Galeotti;—that is, I foresaw not the miscarriage of De la Marck's undertaking, but I foresaw that the expedition of yonder Scottish Archer should end happily for me—and such has been the issue, though in a manner different from what I expected; for the stars, though they foretell general results, are yet silent on the means by which such are accomplished; being often the very reverse of what we expect, or even desire.—But why talk I of these mysteries to thee, Oliver, who art in so far worse than the very devil, who is thy namesake, since he believes and trembles; whereas thou art an infidel both to religion and to science, and wilt remain so till thine own destiny is accomplished, which, as thy horoscope and physiognomy alike assure me, will be by the intervention of the gallows!"

"And if it indeed shall be so," said Oliver, in a resigned tone of voice, "it will be so ordered, because I was too grateful a servant to hesitate at executing the commands of my royal master."

Louis burst into his usual sardonic laugh.—"Thou has broke thy lance on me fairly, Oliver; and, by Our Lady, thou art right, for I defied thee to it. But, prithee, tell me in sadness, dost thou discover anything in these men's measures towards us, which may argue any suspicion of ill-usage?"

"My liege," replied Oliver, "your Majesty, and yonder learned philosopher, look for augury to the stars and heavenly host—I am an earthly reptile, and consider but the things connected with my vocation. But, methinks, there is a lack of that earnest and precise attention on your Majesty, which men show to a welcome guest of a degree so far above them. The Duke, to-night, pleaded weariness, and saw your Majesty not farther than to the street, leaving to the officers of his household the task of conveying you to your lodgings. The rooms here are hastily and carelessly fitted up—the tapestry is hung up awry—and, in one of the pieces, as you may observe, the figures are

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reversed, and stand on their heads, while the trees grow with their roots uppermost."

"Pshaw! accident, and the effect of hurry," said the King. "When did you ever know me concerned about such trifles as these?"

"Not on their own account are they worth notice," said Oliver; "but as intimating the degree of esteem in which the officers of the Duke's household observe your Grace to be held by him. Believe me, that, had his desire seemed sincere that your reception should be in all points marked by scrupulous attention, the zeal of his people would have made minutes do the work of days—And when," he added, pointing to the basin and ewer, "was the furniture of your Majesty's toilette of other substance than silver?"

"Nay," said the King, with a constrained smile, "that last remark upon the shaving utensils, Oliver, is too much in the style of thine own peculiar occupation to be combated by any one.—True it is, that when I was only a refugee, and an exile, I was served upon gold plate by order of the same Charles, who accounted silver too mean for the Dauphin, though he seems to hold that metal too rich for the King of France. Well, Oliver, we will to bed—Our resolution has been made and executed; there is nothing to be done, but to play manfully the game on which we have entered. I know that my cousin of Burgundy, like other wild bulls, shuts his eyes when he begins his career. I have but to watch that moment, like one of the tauridors whom we saw at Burgos, and his impetuosity places him at my mercy."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVENTH.

THE EXPLOSION.

'Tis listening fear, and dumb amazement all,
When to the startled eye, the sudden glance
Appears far south, eruptive through the cloud.

THOMSON'S SUMMER.

THE preceding chapter, agreeably to its title, was designed as a retrospect which might enable the reader fully to understand

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the terms upon which the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy stood together, when the former, moved, partly perhaps by his belief in astrology, which was represented as favourable to the issue of such a measure, and in a great measure doubtless by the conscious superiority of his own powers of mind over those of Charles, had adopted the extraordinary, and upon any other ground altogether inexplicable, resolution of committing his person to the faith of a fierce and exasperated enemy—a resolution also the more rash and unaccountable, as there were various examples in that stormy time to show, that safe-conducts, however solemnly plighted, had proved no assurance for those in whose favour they were conceived; and indeed the murder of the Duke's grandfather, at the Bridge of Montereau, in presence of the father of Louis, and at an interview solemnly agreed upon for the establishment of peace and amnesty, was a horrible precedent, should the Duke be disposed to resort to it.

But the temper of Charles, though rough, fierce, headlong, and unyielding, was not, unless in the full tide of passion, faithless or ungenerous, faults which usually belong to colder dispositions. He was at no pains to show the King more courtesy than the laws of hospitality positively demanded; but, on the other hand, he evinced no purpose of overleaping their sacred barriers.

On the following morning after the King's arrival, there was a general muster of the troops of the Duke of Burgundy, which were so numerous and so excellently appointed, that, perhaps, he was not sorry to have an opportunity of displaying them before his great rival. Indeed, while he paid the necessary compliment of a vassal to his Suzerain, in declaring that these troops were the King's, and not his own, the curl of the upper lip, and the proud glance of his eye, intimated his consciousness, that the words he used were but empty compliment, and that his fine army, at his own unlimited disposal, was as ready to march against Paris as in any other direction. It must have added to Louis's mortification, that he recognised, as forming part of this host, many banners of French nobility, not only of Normandy and Bretagne, but of provinces more immediately subjected to his own authority, who, from various causes of discontent, had joined and made common cause with the Duke of Burgundy.

True to his character, however, Louis seemed to take little notice of these malcontents, while, in fact, he was revolving in

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his mind the various means by which it might be possible to detach them from the banners of Burgundy and bring them back to his own, and resolved for that purpose, that he would cause those to whom he attached the greatest importance to be secretly sounded by Oliver and other agents.

He himself laboured diligently, but at the same time cautiously, to make interest with the Duke's chief officers and advisers, employing for that purpose the usual means of familiar and frequent notice, adroit flattery, and liberal presents; not, as he represented, to alienate their faithful services from their noble master, but that they might lend their aid in preserving peace betwixt France and Burgundy—an end so excellent in itself, and so obviously tending to the welfare of both countries, and of the reigning Princes of either.

The notice of so great and so wise a King was in itself a mighty bribe; promises did much, and direct gifts, which the customs of the time permitted the Burgundian courtiers to accept without scruple, did still more. During a boar-hunt in the forest, while the Duke, eager always upon the immediate object, whether business or pleasure, gave himself entirely up to the ardour of the chase, Louis, unrestrained by his presence, sought and found the means of speaking secretly and separately to many of those who were reported to have most interest with Charles, among whom D'Hymbercourt and Comines were not forgotten; nor did he fail to mix up the advances which he made towards those two distinguished persons with praises of the valour and military skill of the first, and of the profound sagacity and literary talents of the future historian of the period.

Such an opportunity of personally conciliating, or, if the reader pleases, corrupting, the ministers of Charles, was perhaps what the King had proposed to himself as a principal object of his visit, even if his art should fail to cajole the Duke himself. The connection betwixt France and Burgundy was so close, that most of the nobles belonging to the latter country had hopes or actual interests connected with the former, which the favour of Louis could advance, or his personal displeasure destroy. Formed for this and every other species of intrigue, liberal to profusion when it was necessary to advance his plans, and skilful in putting the most plausible colour upon his proposals and presents, the King contrived to reconcile the spirit of the proud to their profit, and to hold out to the real or pretended patriot the good of both

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France and Burgundy, as the ostensible motive; whilst the party's own private interest, like the concealed wheel of some machine, worked not the less powerfully that its operations were kept out of sight. For each man he had a suitable bait, and a proper mode of presenting it; he poured the guerdon into the sleeve of those who were too proud to extend their hand, and trusted that his bounty, though it descended like the dew, without noise and imperceptibly, would not fail to produce, in due season, a plentiful crop of good will at least, perhaps of good offices, to the donor. In fine, although he had been long paving the way by his ministers for an establishment of such an interest in the Court of Burgundy as should be advantageous to the interests of France, Louis's own personal exertions, directed, doubtless, by the information of which he was previously possessed, did more to accomplish that object in a few hours than his agents had effected in years of negotiation.

One man alone the King missed, whom he had been particularly desirous of conciliating, and that was the Count de Crèvecœur, whose firmness, during his conduct as Envoy at Plessis, far from exciting Louis's resentment, had been viewed as a reason for making him his own if possible. He was not particularly gratified when he learnt that the Count, at the head of an hundred lances, was gone towards the frontiers of Brabant, to assist the Bishop, in case of necessity, against William de la Marck and his discontented subjects; but he consoled himself that the appearance of this force, joined with the directions which he had sent by faithful messengers, would serve to prevent any premature disturbances in that country, the breaking out of which might, he foresaw, render his present situation very precarious.

The Court upon this occasion dined in the forest when the hour of noon arrived, as was common in those great hunting parties; an arrangement at this time particularly agreeable to the Duke, desirous as he was to abridge that ceremonious and deferential solemnity with which he was otherwise under the necessity of receiving King Louis. In fact, the King's knowledge of human nature had in one particular misled him on this remarkable occasion. He thought that the Duke would have been inexpressibly flattered to have received such a mark of condescension and confidence from his liege lord; but he forgot that the dependence of this Dukedom upon the Crown of France was privately the subject of galling mortification to a Prince so power-

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ful, so wealthy, and so proud as Charles, whose aim it certainly was to establish an independent kingdom. The presence of the King at the Court of the Duke of Burgundy imposed on that prince the necessity of exhibiting himself in the subordinate character of a vassal, and of discharging many rites of feudal observance and deference, which, to one of his haughty disposition, resembled derogation from the character of a Sovereign Prince, which on all occasions he affected as far as possible to sustain.

But although it was possible to avoid much ceremony by having the dinner upon the green turf, with sound of bugles, broaching of barrels, and all the freedom of a silvan meal, it was necessary that the evening repast should, even for that very reason, be held with more than usual solemnity.

Previous orders for this purpose had been given, and, upon returning to Peronne, King Louis found a banquet prepared with such a profusion of splendour and magnificence, as became the wealth of his formidable vassal, possessed as he was of almost all the Low Countries, then the richest portion of Europe. At the head of the long board, which groaned under plate of gold and silver, filled to profusion with the most exquisite dainties, sat the Duke, and on his right hand, upon a seat more elevated than his own, was placed his royal guest. Behind him stood on one side the son of the Duke of Gueldres, who officiated as his grand carver—on the other, Le Glorieux, his jester, without whom he seldom stirred; for, like most men of his hasty and coarse character, Charles carried to extremity the general taste of that age for court-fools and jesters—experiencing that pleasure in their display of eccentricity and mental infirmity which his more acute, but not more benevolent, rival, loved better to extract from marking the imperfections of humanity in its nobler specimens, and finding subject for mirth in the "fears of the brave, and follies of the wise." And, indeed, if the anecdote related by Brantome be true, that a court-fool, having overheard Louis, in one of his agonies of repentant devotion, confess his accession to the poisoning of his brother Henry, Count of Guyenne, divulged it next day at dinner before the assembled court, that monarch might be supposed rather more than satisfied with the pleasantries of professed jesters for the rest of his life.

But, on the present occasion, Louis neglected not to take notice of the favourite buffoon of the Duke, and to applaud his

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repartees; which he did the rather that he thought he saw that the folly of Le Glorieux, however grossly it was sometimes displayed, covered more than the usual quantity of shrewd and caustic observation proper to his class.

In fact, Tiel Wetzweiler, called Le Glorieux, was by no means a jester of the common stamp. He was a tall, fine-looking man, excellent at many exercises, which seemed scarce reconcilable with mental imbecility, because it must have required patience and attention to attain them. He usually followed the Duke to the chase and to the fight; and at Montl'hery, when Charles was in considerable personal danger, wounded in the throat, and likely to be made prisoner by a French knight who had hold of his horse's rein, Tiel Wetzweiler charged the assailant so forcibly, as to overthrow him and disengage his master. Perhaps he was afraid of this being thought too serious a service for a person of his condition, and that it might excite him enemies among those knights and nobles who had left the care of their master's person to the court fool. At any rate, he chose rather to be laughed at than praised for his achievement, and made such gasconading boasts of his exploits in the battle, that most men thought the rescue of Charles was as ideal as the rest of his tale; and it was on this occasion he acquired the title of Le Glorieux (or the Boastful), by which he was ever afterwards distinguished.

Le Glorieux was dressed very richly, but with little of the usual distinction of his profession; and that little rather of a symbolical than a very literal character. His head was not shorn, on the contrary, he wore a profusion of long curled hair, which descended from under his cap, and joining with a well-arranged and handsomely trimmed beard, set off features, which, but for a wild lightness of eye, might have been termed handsome. A ridge of scarlet velvet carried across the top of his cap, indicated, rather than positively represented, the professional cock's-comb, which distinguished the head-gear of a fool in right of office. His bauble, made of ebony, was crested, as usual, with a fool's head, with ass's ears formed of silver; but so small, and so minutely carved, that, till very closely examined, it might have passed for an official baton of a more solemn character. These were the only badges of his office which his dress exhibited. In other respects, it was such as to match with that of the most courtly nobles. His bonnet displayed a medal of gold; he wore

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a chain of the same metal around his neck; and the fashion of his rich garments was not much more fantastic than those of young gallants who have their clothes made in the extremity of the existing fashion.

To this personage Charles, and Louis, in imitation of his host, often addressed themselves during the entertainment; and both seemed to manifest, by hearty laughter, their amusement at the answers of Le Glorieux.

"Whose seats be those that are vacant?" said Charles to the jester.

"One of those at least should be mine by right of succession, Charles," replied Le Glorieux.

"Why so, knave?" said Charles.

"Because they belong to the Sieur D'Hymbercourt and Des Comines, who are gone so far to fly their falcons, that they have forgot their supper. They who would rather look at a kite on the wing than a pheasant on the board, are of kin to the fool, and he should succeed to the stools, as a part of their movable estate."

"That is but a stale jest, my friend Tiel," said the Duke; "but, fools or wise men, here come the defaulters."

As he spoke, Comines and D'Hymbercourt entered the room, and, after having made their reverence to the two Princes, assumed in silence the seats which were left vacant for them.

"What ho! sirs," exclaimed the Duke, addressing them, "your sport has been either very good or very bad, to lead you so far and so late. Sir Philip des Comines, you are dejected—hath D'Hymbercourt won so heavy a wager on you?—You are a philosopher, and should not grieve at bad fortune.—By Saint George! D'Hymbercourt looks as sad as thou dost.—How now, sirs? Have you found no game? or have you lost your falcons? or has a witch crossed your way? or has the Wild Huntsman* met you in the forest? By my honour, you seem as if you were come to a funeral, not a festival."

While the Duke spoke, the eyes of the company were all directed towards D'Hymbercourt and Des Comines; and the embarrassment and dejection of their countenances, neither being of that class of persons to whom such expression of anxious melancholy was natural, became so remarkable, that

* The famous apparition sometimes called Le Grand Veneur. Sully gives some account of this hunting spectre.

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the mirth and laughter of the company, which the rapid circulation of goblets of excellent wine had raised to a considerable height, were gradually hushed; and, without being able to assign any reason for such a change in their spirits, men spoke in whispers to each other, as on the eve of expecting some strange and important tidings.

"What means this silence, Messires?" said the Duke, elevating his voice, which was naturally harsh. "If you bring these strange looks, and this stranger silence, into festivity, we shall wish you had abode in the marshes seeking for herons, or rather for woodcocks and howlets."

"My gracious Lord," said Des Comines, "as we were about to return hither from the forest, we met the Count of Crèvecœur."

"How!" said the Duke; "already returned from Brabant?—but he found all well there, doubtless?"

"The Count himself will presently give your Grace an account of his news," said D'Hymbercourt, "which we have heard but imperfectly."

"Body of me, where is the Count?" said the Duke.

"He changes his dress, to wait upon your Highness," answered D'Hymbercourt.

"His dress? *Saint Dieu!*" exclaimed the impatient Prince, "what care I for his dress? I think you have conspired with him to drive me mad."

"Or rather, to be plain," said Des Comines, "he wishes to communicate these news at a private audience."

"*Tête-dieu!* my Lord King," said Charles, "this is ever the way our counsellors serve us—If they have got hold of aught which they consider as important for our ear, they look as grave upon the matter, and are as proud of their burden as an ass of a new pack-saddle.—Some one bid Crèvecœur come to us directly!—he comes from the frontiers of Liege, and *we*, at least" (he laid some emphasis on the pronoun), "have no secrets in that quarter which we would shun to have proclaimed before the assembled world."

All perceived that the Duke had drunk so much wine as to increase the native obstinacy of his disposition; and though many would willingly have suggested that the present was neither a time for hearing news, nor for taking counsel, yet all knew the impetuosity of his temper too well to venture on

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farther interference, and sat in anxious expectation of the tidings which the Count might have to communicate.

A brief interval intervened, during which the Duke remained looking eagerly to the door, as if in a transport of impatience, whilst the guests sat with their eyes bent on the table as if to conceal their curiosity and anxiety. Louis alone, maintaining perfect composure, continued his conversation alternately with the grand carver and with the jester.

At length Crèvecœur entered, and was presently saluted by the hurried question of his master, "What news from Liege and Brabant, Sir Count?—the report of your arrival has chased mirth from our table—we hope your actual presence will bring it back to us."

"My liege and master," answered the Count, in a firm but melancholy tone, "the news which I bring you are fitter for the council board than the feasting table."

"Out with them, man, if they were tidings from Antichrist!" said the Duke, but I can guess them—the Liegeois are again in mutiny."

"They are, my lord," said Crèvecœur very gravely.

"Look there, man," said the Duke, "I have hit at once on what you had been so much afraid to mention to me—the hare-brained burghers are again in arms. It could not be in better time, for we may at present have the advice of our own Suzerain," bowing to King Louis, with eyes which spoke the most bitter, though suppressed resentment, "to teach us how such mutineers should be dealt with.—Hast thou more news in thy packet? Out with them, and then answer for yourself why you went not forward to assist the Bishop."

"My lord, the farther tidings are heavy for me to tell, and will be afflicting to you to hear.—No aid of mine, or of living chivalry, could have availed the excellent Prelate. William de la Marck, united with the insurgent Liegeois, has taken his Castle of Schonwaldt, and murdered him in his own hall."

"*Murdered him!*" repeated the Duke, in a deep and low tone, but which nevertheless was heard from the one end of the hall in which they were assembled to the other; "thou hast been imposed upon, Crèvecœur, by some wild report—it is impossible!"

"Alas! my lord!" said the Count, "I have it from an eye-witness, an archer of the King of France's Scottish Guard, who

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was in the hall when the murder was committed by William de la Marck's order."

"And who was doubtless aiding and abetting in the horrible sacrilege," said the Duke, starting up and stamping with his foot with such fury, that he dashed in pieces the footstool which was placed before him. "Bar the doors of this hall, gentlemen —secure the windows—let no stranger stir from his seat, upon pain of instant death!—Gentlemen of my chamber, draw your swords." And turning upon Louis, he advanced his own hand slowly and deliberately to the hilt of his weapon, while the King, without either showing fear, or assuming a defensive posture, only said,

"These news, fair cousin, have staggered your reason."

"No!" replied the Duke, in a terrible tone, "but they have awakened a just resentment, which I have too long suffered to be stifled by trivial considerations of circumstance and place. Murderer of thy brother!—rebel against thy parent!—tyrant over thy subjects!—treacherous ally!—perjured King!—dishonoured gentleman!—thou art in my power, and I thank God for it."

"Rather thank my folly," said the King; "for when we met on equal terms at Montl'hery, methinks you wished yourself farther from me than you are now."

The Duke still held his hand on the hilt of his sword, but refrained to draw his weapon, or to strike a foe who offered no sort of resistance which could in anywise provoke violence.

Meanwhile, wild and general confusion spread itself through the hall. The doors were now fastened and guarded by order of the Duke; but several of the French nobles, few as they were in number, started from their seats, and prepared for the defence of their Sovereign. Louis had spoken not a word either to Orleans or Dunois since they were liberated from restraint at the Castle of Loches, if it could be termed liberation, to be dragged in King Louis's train, objects of suspicion evidently, rather than of respect and regard; but, nevertheless, the voice of Dunois was first heard above the tumult, addressing himself to the Duke of Burgundy.—"Sir Duke, you have forgotten that you are a vassal of France, and that we, your guests, are Frenchmen. If you lift a hand against our Monarch, prepare to sustain the utmost effects of our despair; for, credit me, we shall feast as high with the blood of Burgundy as we have done with its

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wine.—Courage, my Lord of Orleans—and you, gentlemen of France, form yourselves round Dunois, and do as he does!"

It was in that moment when a King might see upon what tempers he could certainly rely. The few independent nobles and knights who attended Louis, most of whom had only received from him frowns or discountenance, unappalled by the display of infinitely superior force, and the certainty of destruction in case they came to blows, hastened to array themselves around Dunois, and, led by him, to press towards the head of the table where the contending Princes were seated.

On the contrary, the tools and agents whom Louis had dragged forward out of their fitting and natural places, into importance which was not due to them, showed cowardice and cold heart, and, remaining still in their seats, seemed resolved not to provoke their fate by intermeddling, whatever might become of their benefactor.

The first of the more generous party was the venerable Lord Crawford, who, with an agility which no one would have expected at his years, forced his way through all opposition (which was the less violent, as many of the Burgundians, either from a point of honour, or a secret inclination to prevent Louis's impending fate, gave way to him), and threw himself boldly between the King and the Duke. He then placed his bonnet, from which his white hair escaped in dishevelled tresses, upon one side of his head—his pale cheek and withered brow coloured, and his aged eye lightened with all the fire of a gallant who is about to dare some desperate action. His cloak was flung over one shoulder, and his action intimated his readiness to wrap it about his left arm, while he unsheathed his sword with his right.

"I have fought for his father and his grandsire," that was all he said, "and, by Saint Andrew, end the matter as it will, I will not fail him at this pinch."

What has taken some time to narrate, happened, in fact, with the speed of light; for so soon as the Duke assumed his threatening posture, Crawford had thrown himself betwixt him and the object of his vengeance; and the French gentlemen, drawing together as fast as they could, were crowding to the same point.

The Duke of Burgundy still remained with his hand on his sword, and seemed in the act of giving the signal for a general onset, which must necessarily have ended in the massacre of the

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weaker party, when Crèvecœur rushed forward, and exclaimed in a voice like a trumpet,—"My liege Lord of Burgundy, beware what you do! This is *your* hall—you are the King's vassal—do not spill the blood of your guest on your hearth, the blood of your Sovereign on the throne you have erected for him, and to which he came under your safeguard. For the sake of your house's honour, do not attempt to revenge one horrid murder by another yet worse!"

"Out of my road, Crèvecœur," answered the Duke, "and let my vengeance pass!—Out of my path!—The wrath of Kings is to be dreaded like that of Heaven."

"Only when, like that of Heaven, it is *just*," answered Crèvecœur, firmly. "Let me pray of you, my lord, to rein the violence of your temper, however justly offended.—And for you, my Lords of France, where resistance is unavailing, let me recommend you to forbear whatever may lead towards bloodshed."

"He is right," said Louis, whose coolness forsook him not in that dreadful moment, and who easily foresaw, that if a brawl should commence, more violence would be dared and done in the heat of blood, than was likely to be attempted if peace were preserved.—"My cousin Orleans—kind Dunois—and you, my trusty Crawford—bring not on ruin and bloodshed by taking offence too hastily. Our cousin the Duke is chafed at the tidings of the death of a near and loving friend, the venerable Bishop of Liege, whose slaughter we lament as he does. Ancient, and unhappily, recent subjects of jealousy, lead him to suspect us of having abetted a crime which our bosom abhors. Should our host murder us on this spot—us, his King and his kinsman, under a false impression of our being accessory to this unhappy accident, our fate will be little lightened, but, on the contrary, greatly aggravated, by your stirring.—Therefore, stand back, Crawford—Were it my last word, I speak as a King to his officer, and demand obedience—Stand back, and, if it is required, yield up your sword. I command you to do so, and your oath obliges you to obey."

"True, true, my lord," said Crawford, stepping back, and returning to the sheath the blade he had half drawn—"It may be all very true; but, by my honour, if I were at the head of threescore and ten of my brave fellows, instead of being loaded with more than the like number of years, I would try whether I could have some reason out of these fine gallants, with their

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golden chains and looped-up bonnets, with braw-warld dyes and devices on them."

The Duke stood with his eyes fixed on the ground for a considerable space, and then said, with bitter irony, "Crèvecœur, you say well; and it concerns our honour, that our obligations to this great King, our honoured and loving guest, be not so hastily adjusted, as in our hasty anger we had at first proposed. We will so act, that all Europe shall acknowledge the justice of our proceedings.—Gentlemen of France, you must render up your arms to my officers! Your master has broken the truce, and has no title to take farther benefit of it. In compassion, however, to your sentiments of honour, and in respect to the rank which he hath disgraced, and the race from which he hath degenerated, we ask not our cousin Louis's sword."

"Not one of us," said Dunois, "will resign our weapon, or quit this hall, unless we are assured of at least our King's safety, in life and limb."

"Nor will a man of the Scottish Guard," exclaimed Crawford, "lay down his arms, save at the command of the King of France, or his High Constable."

"Brave Dunois," said Louis, "and you, my trusty Crawford, your zeal will do me injury instead of benefit.—I trust," he added with dignity, "in my rightful cause, more than in a vain resistance, which would but cost the lives of my best and bravest. —Give up your swords—the noble Burgundians, who accept such honourable pledges, will be more able than you are to protect both you and me.—Give up your swords—It is I who command you."

It was thus that, in this dreadful emergency, Louis showed the promptitude of decision, and clearness of judgment, which alone could have saved his life. He was aware, that until actual blows were exchanged, he should have the assistance of most of the nobles present to moderate the fury of their Prince; but that were a *mêlée* once commenced, he himself and his few adherents must be instantly murdered. At the same time, his worst enemies confessed, that his demeanour had in it nothing either of meanness or cowardice. He shunned to aggravate into frenzy the wrath of the Duke; but he neither deprecated nor seemed to fear it, and continued to look on him with the calm and fixed attention with which a brave man eyes the menacing gestures of a lunatic, whilst conscious that his own steadiness and composure

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operate as an insensible and powerful check on the rage even of insanity.

Crawford, at the King's command, threw his sword to Crèvecœur, saying, "Take it! and the devil give you joy of it.—It is no dishonour to the rightful owner who yields it, for we have had no fair play."

"Hold, gentlemen," said the Duke, in a broken voice, as one whom passion had almost deprived of utterance; "retain your swords; it is sufficient you promise not to use them.—And you, Louis of Valois, must regard yourself as my prisoner, until you are cleared of having abetted sacrilege and murder. Have him to the Castle—Have him to Earl Herbert's Tower. Let him have six gentlemen of his train to attend him, such as he shall choose.—My Lord of Crawford, your guard must leave the Castle, and shall be honourably quartered elsewhere. Up with every drawbridge, and down with every portcullis—Let the gates of the town be trebly guarded—Draw the floating-bridge to the right-hand side of the river—Bring round the Castle my band of Black Walloons, and treble the sentinels on every post!—You, D'Hymbercourt, look that patrols of horse and foot make the round of the town every half-hour during the night, and every hour during the next day,—If indeed such ward shall be necessary after daybreak, for it is like we may be sudden in this matter.—Look to the person of Louis, as you love your life."

He started from the table in fierce and moody haste, darted a glance of mortal enmity at the King, and rushed out of the apartment.

"Sirs," said the King, looking with dignity around him, "grief for the death of his ally hath made your Prince frantic. I trust you know better your duty, as knights and noblemen, than to abet him in his treasonable violence against the person of his liege Lord."

At this moment was heard in the streets the sound of drums beating, and horns blowing, to call out the soldiery in every direction.

"We are," said Crèvecœur, who acted as the Marshal of the Duke's household, "subjects of Burgundy, and must do our duty as such. Our hopes and prayers, and our efforts, will not be wanting to bring about peace and union between your Majesty and our liege Lord. Meantime, we must obey his

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commands. These other lords and knights will be proud to contribute to the convenience of the illustrious Duke of Orleans, of the brave Dunois, and the stout Lord Crawford. I myself must be your Majesty's chamberlain, and bring you to your apartments in other guise than would be my desire, remembering the hospitality of Plessis. You have only to choose your attendants, whom the Duke's commands limit to six."

"Then," said the King, looking around him, and thinking for a moment,—"I desire the attendance of Oliver le Dain, of a private of my Life-Guard called Balafré, who may be unarmed if you will—of Tristan l'Hermite, with two of his people—and my right loyal and trusty philosopher, Martius Galeotti."

"Your Majesty's will shall be complied with in all points," said the Count de Crèvecœur. "Galeotti," he added, after a moment's inquiry, "is, I understand, at present supping in some buxom company, but he shall instantly be sent for; the others will obey your Majesty's command upon the instant."

"Forward, then, to the new abode, which the hospitality of our cousin provides for us," said the King. "We know it is strong, and have only to hope it may be in a corresponding degree safe."

"Heard ye the choice which King Louis has made of his attendants?" said Le Glorieux to Count Crèvecœur apart, as they followed Louis from the hall.

"Surely, my merry gossip," replied the Count,—"What hast thou to object to them?"

"Nothing, nothing—only they are a rare election!—A panderly barber—a Scottish hired cut-throat—a chief hangman and his two assistants, and a thieving charlatan.—I will along with you, Crèvecœur, and take a lesson in the degrees of roguery, from observing your skill in marshalling them. The devil himself could scarce have summoned such a synod, or have been a better president amongst them."

Accordingly, the all-licensed jester, seizing the Count's arm familiarly, began to march along with him, while, under a strong guard, yet forgetting no semblance of respect, he conducted the King towards his new apartment.*

* Note O. Liege Rioters.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHTH.

UNCERTAINTY.

——— Then, happy low, lie down;
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.
HENRY IV., *Part Second.*

FORTY men-at-arms, carrying alternately naked swords and blazing torches, served as the escort, or rather the guard, of King Louis, from the town-hall of Peronne to the Castle; and as he entered within its darksome and gloomy strength, it seemed as if a voice screamed in his ear that warning which the Florentine has inscribed over the portal of the infernal regions, "Leave all hope behind."

At that moment, perhaps, some feeling of remorse might have crossed the King's mind, had he thought on the hundreds, nay, thousands, whom, without cause, or on light suspicion, he had committed to the abysses of his dungeons, deprived of all hope of liberty, and loathing even the life to which they clung by animal instinct.

The broad glare of the torches outfacing the pale moon, which was more obscured on this than on the former night, and the red smoky light which they dispersed around the ancient buildings, gave a darker shade to that huge donjon, called the Earl Herbert's Tower. It was the same that Louis had viewed with misgiving presentiment on the preceding evening, and of which he was now doomed to become an inhabitant, under the terror of what violence soever the wrathful temper of his overgrown vassal might tempt him to exercise in those secret recesses of despotism.

To aggravate the King's painful feelings, he saw, as he crossed the courtyard, one or two bodies, over each of which had been hastily flung a military cloak. He was not long of discerning that they were corpses of slain archers of the Scottish Guard, who having disputed, as the Count Crèvecœur informed him, the command given them to quit the post near the King's apartments, a brawl had ensued between them and the Duke's Walloon body-guards, and before it could be composed by the officers on either side, several lives had been lost.

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"My trusty Scots!" said the King, as he looked upon this melancholy spectacle; "had they brought only man to man, all Flanders, ay, and Burgundy to boot, had not furnished champions to mate you."

"Yes, an it please your Majesty," said Balafré, who attended close behind the King, "Maistery mows the meadow—few men can fight more than two at once.—I myself never care to meet three, unless it be in the way of special duty, when one must not stand to count heads."

"Art thou there, old acquaintance?" said the King, looking behind him; "then I have one true subject with me yet."

"And a faithful minister, whether in your councils, or in his offices about your royal person," whispered Oliver le Dain.

"We are all faithful," said Tristan l'Hermite, gruffly; "for should they put to death your Majesty, there is not one of us whom they would suffer to survive you, even if we would."

"Now, that is what I call good corporal bail for fidelity," said Le Glorieux, who, as already mentioned, with the restlessness proper to an infirm brain, had thrust himself into their company.

Meanwhile, the Seneschal, hastily summoned, was turning with laborious effort the ponderous key which opened the reluctant gate of the huge Gothic Keep, and was at last fain to call for the assistance of one of Crèvecœur's attendants. When they had succeeded, six men entered with torches, and showed the way through a narrow and winding passage, commanded at different points by shot-holes from vaults and casements constructed behind, and in the thickness of the massive walls. At the end of this passage arose a stair of corresponding rudeness, consisting of huge blocks of stone, roughly dressed with the hammer, and of unequal height. Having mounted this ascent, a strong iron-clenched door admitted them to what had been the great hall of the donjon, lighted but very faintly even during the day-time (for the apertures, diminished in appearance by the excessive thickness of the walls, resembled slits rather than windows), and now, but for the blaze of the torches, almost perfectly dark. Two or three bats, and other birds of evil presage, roused by the unusual glare, flew against the lights, and threatened to extinguish them; while the Seneschal formally apologised to the King, that the State-hall had not been put in order, such

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was the hurry of the notice sent to him; and adding, that, in truth, the apartment had not been in use for twenty years, and rarely before that time, so far as ever he had heard, since the time of King Charles the Simple.

"King Charles the Simple!" echoed Louis; "I know the history of the Tower now.—He was here murdered by his treacherous vassal, Herbert, Earl of Vermandois—So say our annals. I knew there was something concerning the Castle of Peronne which dwelt on my mind, though I could not recall the circumstance.—*Here*, then, my predecessor was slain!"

"Not here, not exactly here, and please your Majesty," said the old Seneschal, stepping with the eager haste of a cicerone, who shows the curiosities of such a place—"Not *here*, but in the side chamber a little onward, which opens from your Majesty's bedchamber."

He hastily opened a wicket at the upper end of the hall, which led into a bedchamber, small, as is usual in those old buildings; but, even for that reason, rather more comfortable than the waste hall through which they had passed. Some hasty preparations had been here made for the King's accommodation. Arras had been tacked up, a fire lighted in the rusty grate, which had been long unused, and a pallet laid down for those gentlemen who were to pass the night in his chamber, as was then usual.

"We will get beds in the hall for the rest of your attendants," said the garrulous old man; "but we have had such brief notice, if it please your Majesty—And if it please your Majesty to look upon this little wicket behind the arras, it opens into the little old cabinet in the thickness of the wall, where Charles was slain; and there is a secret passage from below, which admitted the men who were to deal with him. And your Majesty, whose eyesight I hope is better than mine, may see the blood still on the oak-floor, though the thing was done five hundred years ago."

While he thus spoke, he kept fumbling to open the postern of which he spoke, until the King said, "Forbear, old man—forbear but a little while, when thou mayest have a newer tale to tell, and fresher blood to show—My Lord of Crèvecœur, what say you?"

"I can but answer, Sire, that these two interior apartments

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are as much at your Majesty's disposal as those in your own Castle at Plessis, and that Crèvecœur, a name never blackened by treachery or assassination, has the guard of the exterior defences of it."

"But the private passage into that closet, of which the old man speaks?" This King Louis said in a low and anxious tone, holding Crèvecœur's arm fast with one hand, and pointing to the wicket-door with the other.

"It must be some dream of Mornay's," said Crèvecœur, "or some old and absurd tradition of the place;—but we will examine."

He was about to open the closet door, when Louis answered, "No, Crèvecœur, no—Your honour is sufficient warrant.—But what will your Duke do with me, Crèvecœur? He cannot hope to keep me long a prisoner; and, in short, give me your opinion, Crèvecœur."

"My Lord, and Sire," said the Count, "how the Duke of Burgundy must resent this horrible cruelty on the person of his near relative and ally, is for your Majesty to judge; and what right he may have to consider it as instigated by your Majesty's emissaries, you only can know. But my master is noble in his disposition, and made incapable, even by the very strength of his passions, of any underhand practices. Whatever he does will be done in the face of day and of the two nations. And I can but add, that it will be the wish of every counsellor around him—excepting perhaps one—that he should behave in this matter with mildness and generosity, as well as justice."

"Ah! Crèvecœur," said Louis, taking his hand as if affected by some painful recollections, "how happy is the Prince who has counsellors near him, who can guard him against the effects of his own angry passions! Their names will be read in golden letters, when the history of his reign is perused.—Noble Crèvecœur, had it been my lot to have such as thou art about *my* person!"

"It had in that case been your Majesty's study to have got rid of them as fast as you could," said Le Glorieux.

"Aha! Sir Wisdom, art thou there?" said Louis, turning round, and instantly changing the pathetic tone in which he had addressed Crèvecœur, and adopting with facility one which had a turn of gaiety in it—"Hast *thou* followed us hither?"

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"Ay, sir," answered Le Glorieux; "Wisdom must follow in motley, where Folly leads the way in purple."

"How shall I construe that, Sir Solomon?" answered Louis—"Wouldst thou change conditions with me?"

"Not I, by my halidome," quoth Le Glorieux, "if you would give me fifty crowns to boot."

"Why, wherefore so?—Methinks I could be well enough contented, as princes go, to have thee for my king."

"Ay, Sire," replied Le Glorieux; "but the question is, whether, judging of your Majesty's wit from its having lodged you here, I should not have cause to be ashamed of having so dull a fool."

"Peace, sirrah!" said the Count of Crèvecœur; "your tongue runs too fast."

"Let it take its course," said the King; "I know of no such fair subject of raillery, as the follies of those who should know better.—Here, my sagacious friend, take this purse of gold, and with it the advice, never to be so great a fool as to deem yourself wiser than other people. Prithee, do me so much favour, as to inquire after my astrologer, Martius Galeotti, and send him hither to me presently."

"I will, without fail, my Liege," answered the jester; "and I wot well I shall find him at Jan Dopplethur's; for philosophers, as well as fools, know where the best wine is sold."

"Let me pray for free entrance for this learned person through your guards, Seignior de Crèvecœur," said Louis.

"For his entrance, unquestionably," answered the Count; "but it grieves me to add, that my instructions do not authorise me to permit any one to quit your Majesty's apartments.—I wish your Majesty a good night," he subjoined, "and will presently make such arrangements in the outer hall, as may put the gentlemen who are to inhabit it more at their ease."

"Give yourself no trouble for them, Sir Count," replied the King; "they are men accustomed to set hardships at defiance; and, to speak truth, excepting that I wish to see Galeotti, I would desire as little farther communication from without this night as may be consistent with your instructions."

"These are, to leave your Majesty," replied Crèvecœur, "undisputed possession of your own apartments. Such are my master's orders."

Your Master, Count Crèvecœur," answered Louis, "whom

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I may also term mine, is a right gracious master.—My dominions," he added, "are somewhat shrunk in compass, now that they have dwindled to an old hall and a bedchamber; but they are still wide enough for all the subjects which I can at present boast of."

The Count of Crèvecœur took his leave; and shortly after, they could hear the noise of the sentinels moving to their posts, accompanied with the word of command from the officers, and the hasty tread of the guards who were relieved. At length all became still, and the only sound which filled the air, was the sluggish murmur of the river Somme, as it glided, deep and muddy, under the walls of the castle.

"Go into the hall, my mates," said Louis to his train; "but do not lie down to sleep. Hold yourselves in readiness, for there is still something to be done to-night, and that of moment."

Oliver and Tristan retired to the hall accordingly, in which Le Balafré and the Provost-Marshal's two officers had remained, when the others entered the bedchamber. They found that those without had thrown fagots enough upon the fire to serve the purpose of light and heat at the same time, and, wrapping themselves in their cloaks, had sat down on the floor, in postures which variously expressed the discomposure and dejection of their minds. Oliver and Tristan saw nothing better to be done, than to follow their example; and, never very good friends in the days of their court-prosperity, they were both equally reluctant to repose confidence in each other upon this strange and sudden reverse of fortune. So that the whole party sat in silent dejection.

Meanwhile, their master underwent, in the retirement of his secret chamber, agonies that might have atoned for some of those which had been imposed by his command. He paced the room with short and unequal steps, often stood still and clasped his hands together, and gave loose, in short, to agitation, which, in public, he had found himself able to suppress so successfully. At length, pausing, and wringing his hands, he planted himself opposite to the wicket-door, which had been pointed out by old Mornay as leading to the scene of the murder of one of his predecessors, and gradually gave voice to his feelings in a broken soliloquy.

"Charles the Simple—Charles the Simple!—what will

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posterity call the Eleventh Louis, whose blood will probably soon refresh the stains of thine? Louis the Fool—Louis the Driveller—Louis the Infatuated—are all terms too slight to mark the extremity of my idiocy! To think these hotheaded Liegeois, to whom rebellion is as natural as their food, would remain quiet—to dream that the Wild Beast of Ardennes would for a moment be interrupted in his career of force and bloodthirsty brutality—to suppose that I could use reason and arguments to any good purpose with Charles of Burgundy, until I had tried the force of such exhortations with success upon a wild bull—Fool, and double idiot that I was! But the villain Martius shall not escape—He has been at the bottom of this, he and the vile priest, the detestable Balue.* If I ever get out of this danger, I will tear from his head the Cardinal's cap, though I pull the scalp along with it! But the other traitor is in my hands—I am yet King enough—have yet an empire roomy enough—for the punishment of the quack-salving, word-mongering, star-gazing, lie-coining impostor, who has at once made a prisoner and a dupe of me!—The conjunction of the constellations—ay, the conjunction—He must talk nonsense which would scarce gull a thrice-sodden sheep's head, and I must be idiot enough to think I understood him! But we shall see presently what the conjunction hath really boded. But first let me to my devotions."

Above the little door, in memory perhaps of the deed which had been done within, was a rude niche, containing a crucifix cut in stone. Upon this emblem the King fixed his eyes, as if about to kneel, but stopped short, as if he applied to the blessed image the principles of worldly policy, and deemed it rash to approach its presence without having secured the private intercession of some supposed favourite. He therefore turned from the crucifix as unworthy to look upon it, and selecting from the images with which, as often mentioned, his hat was completely garnished, a representation of the Lady of Clery, knelt down before it, and made the following extraordinary prayer; in which, it is to be observed, the grossness of his superstition induced him, in some degree, to consider the Virgin of Clery as a different person from the Madonna of Embrun, a favourite idol, to whom he often paid his vows.

"Sweet Lady of Clery," he exclaimed clasping his hands

* Note P. Balue.

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and beating his breast while he spoke—"blessed Mother of Mercy! thou who art omnipotent with Omnipotence, have compassion with me a sinner! It is true, that I have something neglected thee for thy blessed sister of Embrun; but I am a King, my power is great, my wealth boundless; and, were it otherwise, I would double the *gabelle* on my subjects, rather than not pay my debts to you both. Undo these iron doors—fill up these tremendous moats—lead me, as a mother leads a child, out of this present and pressing danger! If I have given thy sister the county of Boulogne, to be held of her for ever, have I no means of showing devotion to thee also? Thou shalt have the broad and rich province of Champagne; and its vineyards shall pour their abundance into thy convent. I had promised the province to my brother Charles; but he, thou knowest, is dead—poisoned by that wicked Abbé of Saint John d'Angely, whom, if I live, I will punish!—I promised this once before, but this time I will keep my word.—If I had any knowledge of the crime, believe, dearest patroness, it was because I knew no better method of quieting the discontents of my kingdom. Oh, do not reckon that old debt to my account to-day; but be, as thou hast ever been, kind, benignant, and easy to be entreated! Sweetest Lady, work with thy child, that he will pardon all past sins, and one—one little deed which I must do this night—nay, it is no *sin*, dearest Lady of Clery—no sin, but an act of justice privately administered; for the villain is the greatest impostor that ever poured falsehood into a Prince's ear, and leans besides to the filthy heresy of the Greeks. He is not deserving of thy protection; leave him to my care; and hold it as good service that I rid the world of him, for the man is a necromancer and wizard, that is not worth thy thought and care—a dog, the extinction of whose life ought to be of as little consequence in thine eyes, as the treading out a spark that drops from a lamp, or springs from a fire. Think not of this little matter, gentlest, kindest Lady, but only consider how thou canst best aid me in my troubles! and I here bind my royal signet to thy effigy, in token that I will keep word concerning the county of Champagne, and that this shall be the last time I will trouble thee in affairs of blood, knowing thou art so kind, so gentle, and so tender-hearted."

After this extraordinary contract with the object of his adora-

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tion, Louis recited, apparently with deep devotion, the seven penitential psalms in Latin, and several aves and prayers especially belonging to the service of the Virgin. He then arose, satisfied that he had secured the intercession of the Saint to whom he had prayed, the rather, as he craftily reflected, that most of the sins for which he had requested her mediation on former occasions had been of a different character, and that, therefore, the Lady of Clery was less likely to consider him as a hardened and habitual shedder of blood, than the other saints whom he had more frequently made confidants of his crimes in that respect.*

When he had thus cleared his conscience, or rather whited it over like a sepulchre, the king thrust his head out at the door of the hall, and summoned Le Balafré into his apartment. "My good soldier," he said, "thou hast served me long, and hast had little promotion. We are here in a case where I may either live or die; but I would not willingly die an ungrateful man, or leave, so far as the saints may place it in my power, either a friend or an enemy unrecompensed. Now I have a friend to be rewarded, that is thyself—an enemy to be punished according to his deserts, and that is the base, treacherous villain, Martius Galeotti, who, by his impostures and specious falsehoods, has trained me hither into the power of my mortal enemy, with as firm a purpose of my destruction, as ever butcher had of slaying the beast which he drove to the shambles."

"I will challenge him on that quarrel, since they say he is a fighting blade, though he looks somewhat unwieldy," said Le Balafré. "I doubt not but the Duke of Burgundy is so much a friend to men of the sword, that he will allow us a fair field within some reasonable space; and if your Majesty live so long, and enjoy so much freedom, you shall behold me do battle in your right, and take as proper a vengeance on this philosopher as your heart could desire."

"I commend your bravery and your devotion to my service," said the King. "But this treacherous villain is a stout man-at-arms, and I would not willingly risk thy life, my brave soldier."

"I were no brave soldier, if it please your Majesty," said Balafré, "if I dared not face a better man than he. A fine

* Note Q. Louis's confession.

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thing it would be for me, who can neither read nor write, to be afraid of a fat lurdane, who has done little else all his life!"

"Nevertheless," said the King, "it is not our pleasure so to put thee in venture, Balafré. This traitor comes hither, summoned by our command. We would have thee, so soon as thou canst find occasion, close up with him, and smite him under the fifth rib—Dost thou understand me?"

"Truly I do," answered Le Balafré; "but, if it please your Majesty, this is a matter entirely out of my course of practice. I could not kill you a dog unless it were in hot assault, or pursuit, or upon defiance given, or such like."

"Why sure, *thou* dost not pretend to tenderness of heart!" said the King; "thou who hast been first in storm and siege, and most eager, as men tell me, on the pleasures and advantages which are gained on such occasions by the rough heart and the bloody hand?"

"My lord," answered Le Balafré, "I have neither feared nor spared your enemies, sword in hand. And an assault is a desperate matter, under risks which raise a man's blood so, that, by Saint Andrew, it will not settle for an hour or two,—which I call a fair license for plundering after a storm. And God pity us poor soldiers, who are first driven mad with danger, and then madder with victory. I have heard of a legion consisting entirely of saints; and methinks it would take them all to pray and intercede for the rest of the army, and for all who wear plumes and corselets, buff coats and broadswords. But what your Majesty purposes is out of my course of practice, though I will never deny that it has been wide enough. As for the Astrologer, if he be a traitor, let him e'en die a traitor's death—I will neither meddle nor make with it. Your Majesty has your Provost, and two of his Marshal's men without, who are more fit for dealing with him than a Scottish gentleman of my family and standing in the service."

"You say well," said the King; "but, at least, it belongs to thy duty to prevent interruption, and to guard the execution of my most just sentence."

"I will do so against all Peronne," said Le Balafré. "Your Majesty need not doubt my fealty in that which I can reconcile to my conscience, which, for mine own convenience and the service of your royal Majesty, I can vouch to be a pretty large one—at least, I know I have done some deeds for your Majesty,

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which I would rather have eaten a handful of my own dagger than I would have done for any else."

"Let that rest," said the King; "and hear you—when Galeotti is admitted, and the door shut on him, do you stand to your weapon, and guard the entrance on the inside of the apartment. Let no one intrude—that is all I require of you. Go hence, and send the Provost-Marshal to me."

Balafré left the apartment accordingly, and in a minute afterwards Tristan l'Hermite entered from the hall.

"Welcome, gossip," said the King; "what thinkest thou of our situation?"

"As of men sentenced to death," said the Provost-Marshal, "unless there come a reprieve from the Duke."

"Reprieved or not, he that decoyed us into this snare shall go our *fourrier* to the next world, to take up lodgings for us," said the King with a grisly and ferocious smile. "Tristan, thou hast done many an act of brave justice—*finis*—I should have said *funis coronat opus*—thou must stand by me to the end."

"I will, my liege," said Tristan; "I am but a plain fellow, but I am grateful. I will do my duty within these walls, or elsewhere; and while I live, your Majesty's breath shall pour as potential a note of condemnation, and your sentence be as literally executed, as when you sat on your own throne. They may deal with me the next hour for it if they will—I care not."

"It is even what I expected of thee, my loving gossip," said Louis; "but hast thou good assistance?—the traitor is strong and able-bodied, and will doubtless be clamorous for aid. The Scot will do nought but keep the door; and well that he can be brought to that by flattery and humouring. Then Oliver is good for nothing but lying, flattering, and suggesting dangerous counsels; and, *Ventre Saint-dieu!* I think is more like one day to deserve the halter himself, than to use it to another. Have you men, think you, and means, to make sharp and sure work?"

"I have Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André with me," said he, "men so expert in their office, that out of three men, they would hang up one ere his two companions were aware. And we have all resolved to live or die with your Majesty, knowing we shall have as short breath to draw when you are gone, as ever

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fell to the lot of any of our patients.—But what is to be our present subject, an it please your Majesty? I love to be sure of my man; for, as your Majesty is pleased sometimes to remind me, I have now and then mistaken the criminal, and strung up in his place an honest labourer, who had given your Majesty no offence."

"Most true," said the other. "Know then, Tristan, the condemned person is Martius Galeotti.—You start, but it is even as I say. The villain hath trained us all hither by false and treacherous representations, that he might put us into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy without defence."

"But not without vengeance!" said Tristan; "were it the last act of my life, I would sting him home like an expiring wasp, should I be crushed to pieces on the next instant!"

"I know thy trusty spirit," said the King, "and the pleasure which, like other good men, thou dost find in the discharge of thy duty, since virtue, as the schoolmen say, is its own reward. But away and prepare the priests, for the victim approaches."

"Would you have it done in your own presence, my gracious liege?" said Tristan.

Louis declined this offer; but charged the Provost-Marshal to have everything ready for the punctual execution of his commands the moment the Astrologer left his apartment; "for," said the King, "I will see the villain once more, just to observe how he bears himself towards the master whom he has led into the toils. I shall love to see the sense of approaching death strike the colour from that ruddy cheek, and dim that eye which laughed as it lied.—Oh, that there were but another with him, whose counsels aided his prognostications! But if I survive this—look to your scarlet, my Lord Cardinal! for Rome shall scarce protect you—be it spoken under favour of Saint Peter and the blessed Lady of Clery, who is all over mercy.—Why do you tarry? Go get your grooms ready. I expect the villain instantly. I pray to Heaven he take not fear and come not!—that were indeed a baulk.—Begone, Tristan—thou wert not wont to be so slow when business was to be done."

"On the contrary, an it like your Majesty, you were ever wont to say that I was too fast, and mistook your purpose, and did the job on the wrong subject. Now, please your Majesty to give me a sign, just when you part with Galeotti for the night, whether the business goes on or no. I have known your

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Majesty once or twice change your mind, and blame me for over despatch."*

"Thou suspicious creature," answered King Louis, "I tell thee I will *not* change my mind;—but to silence thy remonstrances, observe, if I say to the knave at parting, 'There is a Heaven above us!' then let the business go on; but if I say, 'Go in peace,' you will understand that my purpose is altered."

"My head is somewhat of the dullest out of my own department," said Tristan l'Hermite. "Stay, let me rehearse—If you bid him depart in peace, am I to have him dealt upon?"

"No, no—idiot, no," said the King; "in that case you let him pass free. But if I say '*There is a Heaven above us!*' up with him a yard or two nearer the planets he is so conversant with."

"I wish we may have the means here," said the Provost.

"Then *up* with him, or *down* with him, it matters not which," said the King, grimly smiling.

"And the body," said the Provost, "how shall we dispose of it?"

"Let me see an instant," said the King—"the windows of the hall are too narrow; but that projecting oriel is wide enough. We will over with him into the Somme, and put a paper on his breast, with the legend, 'Let the justice of the King pass toll-free.' The Duke's officers may seize it for duties if they dare."

The Provost-Marshal left the apartment of Louis, and summoned his two assistants to council in an embrasure in the great hall, where Trois-Eschelles stuck a torch against the wall to give them light. They discoursed in whispers, little noticed by Oliver le Dain, who seemed sunk in dejection, and Le Balafré, who was fast asleep.

"Comrades," said the Provost to his executioners, "perhaps you have thought that our vocation was over, or that, at least, we were more likely to be the subjects of the duty of others, than to have any more to discharge on our own parts. But courage, my mates! our gracious master has reserved for us one

* Varillas, in a history of Louis XI., observes, that his Provost-Marshal was often so precipitate in execution, as to slay another person instead of him whom the King had indicated. This always occasioned a double execution, for the wrath or revenge of Louis was never satisfied with a vicarious punishment.

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noble cast of our office, and it must be gallantly executed, as by men who would live in history."

"Ay, I guess how it is," said Trois-Eschelles; "our patron is like the old Kaisars of Rome, who, when things come to an extremity, or, as we would say, to the ladder-foot with them, were wont to select from their own ministers of justice some experienced person, who might spare their sacred persons from the awkward attempts of a novice, or blunderer in our mystery. It was a pretty custom for Ethnics; but, as a good catholic, I should make some scruple at laying hands on the Most Christian King."

"Nay, but, brother, you are ever too scrupulous," said Petit-André. "If he issues word and warrant for his own execution, I see not how we can in duty dispute it. He that dwells at Rome must obey the Pope—the Marshal's men must do their master's bidding, and he the King's."

"Hush, you knaves!" said the Provost-Marshal, "there is here no purpose concerning the King's person, but only that of the Greek heretic pagan and Mahomedan wizard, Martius Galeotti."

"Galeotti!" answered Petit-André; "that comes quite natural. I never knew one of these legerdemain fellows, who pass their life, as one may say, in dancing upon a tight rope, but what they came at length to caper at the end of one—*tchick.*"

"My only concern is," said Trois-Eschelles, looking upwards, "that the poor creature must die without confession."

"Tush! tush!" said the Provost-Marshal, in reply, "he is a rank heretic and necromancer—a whole college of priests could not absolve him from the doom he has deserved. Besides, if he hath a fancy that way, thou hast a gift, Trois-Eschelles, to serve him for ghostly father thyself. But what is more material, I fear you must use your poniards, my mates; for you have not here the fitting conveniences for the exercise of your profession."

"Now our Lady of the Isle of Paris forbid," said Trois-Eschelles, "that the King's command should find me destitute of my tools! I always wear around my body Saint Francis's cord, doubled four times, with a handsome loop at the farther end of it; for I am of the company of Saint Francis, and may wear his cowl when I am *in extremis*—I thank God and the good fathers of Saumur."

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"And for me," said Petit-André, "I have always in my budget a handy block and sheaf, or a pulley as they call it, with a strong screw for securing it where I list, in case we should travel where trees are scarce, or high-branched from the ground. I have found it a great convenience."

"That will suit as well," said the Provost-Marshal; "you have but to screw your pulley into yonder beam above the door, and pass the rope over it. I will keep the fellow in some conversation near the spot until you adjust the noose under his chin, and then"——

"And then we run up the rope," said Petit-André, "and, *tchick*, our Astrologer is so far in Heaven, that he hath not a foot on earth."

"But these gentlemen," said Trois-Eschelles, looking towards the chimney, "do not these help, and so take a handsel of our vocation?"

"Hem! no," answered the Provost; "the barber only contrives mischief, which he leaves other men to execute; and for the Scot, he keeps the door when the deed is a-doing, which he hath not spirit or quickness sufficient to partake in more actively —every one to his trade."

With infinite dexterity, and even a sort of professional delight, which sweetened the sense of their own precarious situation, the worthy executioners of the Provost's mandates adapted their rope and pulley for putting in force the sentence which had been uttered against Galeotti by the captive Monarch—seeming to rejoice that that last action was to be one so consistent with their past life. Tristan l'Hermite* sat eyeing their proceedings with a species of satisfaction; while Oliver paid no attention to them whatever; and Ludovic Lesly, if, awaked by the bustle, he looked upon them at all, considered them as engaged in matters entirely unconnected with his own duty, and for which he was not to be regarded as responsible in one way or other.

* The author has endeavoured to give to the odious Tristan l'Hermite a species of dogged and brutal fidelity to Louis, similar to the attachment of a bull-dog to his master. With all the atrocity of his execrable character, he was certainly a man of courage, and was, in his youth, made knight on the breach of Fronsac, with a great number of other young nobles, by the honour-giving hand of the elder Dunois, the celebrated hero of Charles the Vth's reign.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-NINTH.

RECRIMINATION.

Thy time is not yet out—the devil thou servest
Has not as yet deserted thee. He aids
The friends who drudge for him, as the blind man
Was aided by the guide, who lent his shoulder
O'er rough and smooth, until he reached the brink
Of the fell precipice—then hurl'd him downward.

OLD PLAY.

WHEN obeying the command, or rather the request of Louis, —for he was in circumstances in which, though a Monarch, he could only *request* Le Glorieux to go in search of Martius Galeotti,—the jester had no trouble in executing his commission, betaking himself at once to the best tavern in Peronne, of which he himself was rather more than an occasional frequenter, being a great admirer of that species of liquor which reduced all other men's brains to a level with his own.

He found, or rather observed, the Astrologer in the corner of the public drinking-room—stove, as it is called in German and Flemish, from its principal furniture—sitting in close colloquy with a female in a singular, and something like a Moorish or Asiatic garb, who, as Le Glorieux approached Martius, rose as in the act to depart.

"These," said the stranger, "are news upon which you may rely with absolute certainty;" and with that disappeared among the crowd of guests who sat grouped at different tables in the apartment.

"Cousin Philosopher," said the jester, presenting himself, "Heaven no sooner relieves one sentinel than it sends another to supply the place. One fool being gone, here I come another, to guide you to the apartments of Louis of France."

"And art thou the messenger?" said Martius, gazing on him with prompt apprehension, and discovering at once the jester's quality, though less intimated, as we have before noticed, than was usual, by his external appearance.

"Ay, sir, and like your learning," answered Le Glorieux; "when Power sends Folly to entreat the approach of Wisdom, 'tis a sure sign what foot the patient halts upon."

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"How if I refuse to come, when summoned at so late an hour by such a messenger?" said Galeotti.

"In that case, we will consult your ease, and carry you," said Le Glorieux. "Here are half-a-score of stout Burgundian yeomen at the door, with whom He of Crèvecœur has furnished me to that effect. For know, that my friend Charles of Burgundy and I have not taken away our kinsman Louis's crown, which he was ass enough to put into our power, but have only filed and clipt it a little; and though reduced to the size of a spangle, it is still pure gold. In plain terms, he is still paramount over his own people, yourself included, and Most Christian King of the old dining-hall in the Castle of Peronne, to which you, as his liege subject, are presently obliged to repair."

"I attend you, sir," said Martius Galeotti, and accompanied Le Glorieux accordingly—seeing, perhaps, that no evasion was possible.

"Ay, sir," said the Fool, as they went towards the Castle, "you do well; for we treat our kinsman as men use an old famished lion in his cage, and thrust him now and then a calf to mumble, to keep his old jaws in exercise."

"Do you mean," said Martius, "that the King intends me bodily injury?"

"Nay, that you can guess better than I," said the jester; "for though the night be cloudy, I warrant you can see the stars through the mist. I know nothing of the matter, not I—only my mother always told me to go warily near an old rat in a trap, for he was never so much disposed to bite."

The Astrologer asked no more questions, and Le Glorieux, according to the custom of those of his class, continued to run on in a wild and disordered strain of sarcasm and folly mingled together, until he delivered the philosopher to the guard at the castle-gate of Peronne; where he was passed from warder to warder, and at length admitted within Herbert's Tower.

The hints of the jester had not been lost on Martius Galeotti, and he saw something which seemed to confirm them in the look and manner of Tristan, whose mode of addressing him, as he marshalled him to the King's bedchamber, was lowering, sullen, and ominous. A close observer of what passed on earth, as well as among the heavenly bodies, the pulley and the rope also caught the Astrologer's eye; and as the latter was in a state of vibration, he concluded that some one who had been

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busy adjusting it had been interrupted in the work by his sudden arrival. All this he saw, and summoned together his subtilty to evade the impending danger, resolved, should he find that impossible, to defend himself to the last against whomsoever should assail him.

Thus resolved, and with a step and look corresponding to the determination he had taken, Martius presented himself before Louis, alike unabashed at the miscarriage of his predictions, and undismayed at the Monarch's anger, and its probable consequences.

"Every good planet be gracious to your Majesty!" said Galeotti, with an inclination almost Oriental in manner—"Every evil constellation withhold their influences from my royal master!"

"Methinks," replied the King, "that when you look around this apartment, when you think where it is situated, and how guarded, your wisdom might consider that my propitious stars had proved faithless, and that each evil conjunction had already done its worst. Art thou not ashamed, Martius Galeotti, to see me here, and a prisoner, when you recollect by what assurances I was lured hither?"

"And art *thou* not ashamed, my royal Sire?" replied the philosopher; "thou, whose step in science was so forward, thy apprehension so quick, thy perseverance so unceasing,—art thou not ashamed to turn from the first frown of fortune, like a craven from the first clash of arms? Didst thou propose to become participant of those mysteries which raise men above the passions, the mischances, the pains, the sorrows of life, a state only to be attained by rivalling the firmness of the ancient Stoic, and dost thou shrink from the first pressure of adversity, and forfeit the glorious prize for which thou didst start as a competitor, frightened out of the course, like a scared racer, by shadowy and unreal evils?"

"Shadowy and unreal! frontless as thou art!" exclaimed the King, "is this dungeon unreal?—the weapons of the guards of my detested enemy Burgundy, which you may hear clash at the gate, are those shadows?—What, traitor, *are* real evils, if imprisonment, dethronement, and danger of life, are not so?"

"Ignorance—ignorance, my brother, and prejudice," answered the sage, with great firmness, "are the only real evils. Believe

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me, that Kings, in the plenitude of power, if immersed in ignorance and prejudice, are less free than sages in a dungeon, and loaded with material chains. Towards this true happiness it is mine to guide you—be it yours to attend to my instructions."

"And it is to such philosophical freedom that your lessons would have guided me?" said the King, very bitterly. "I would you had told me at Plessis, that the dominion promised me so liberally was an empire over my own passions; that the success of which I was assured, related to my progress in philosophy; and that I might become as wise and as learned as a strolling mountebank of Italy! I might surely have attained this mental ascendency at a more moderate price than that of forfeiting the fairest crown in Christendom, and becoming tenant of a dungeon in Peronne! Go, sir, and think not to escape condign punishment—*There is a Heaven above us!*"

"I leave you not to your fate," replied Martius, "until I have vindicated, even in your eyes, darkened as they are, that reputation, a brighter gem than the brightest in thy crown, and at which the world shall wonder, ages after all the race of Capet are mouldered into oblivion in the charnels of Saint Denis."

"Speak on," said Louis; "thine impudence cannot make me change my purposes or my opinion—Yet, as I may never again pass judgment as a King, I will not censure thee unheard. Speak, then—though the best thou canst say will be to speak the truth. Confess that I am a dupe, thou an impostor, thy pretended science a dream, and the planets which shine above us as little influential of our destiny, as their shadows, when reflected in the river, are capable of altering its course."

"And how know'st thou," answered the Astrologer, boldly, "the secret influence of yonder blessed lights? Speak'st thou of their inability to influence waters, when yet thou know'st that even the weakest, the moon herself,—weakest because nearest to this wretched earth of ours,—holds under her domination, not such poor streams as the Somme, but the tides of the mighty ocean itself, which ebb and increase as her disc waxes and wanes, and watch her influence as a slave waits the nod of a Sultana? And now, Louis of Valois, answer my parable in turn—Confess, art thou not like the foolish passenger, who becomes wroth with his pilot because he cannot bring the vessel into harbour without

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experiencing occasionally the adverse force of winds and currents? I could indeed point to thee the probable issue of thine enterprise as prosperous, but it was in the power of Heaven alone to conduct thee thither; and if the path be rough and dangerous, was it in my power to smooth or render it more safe? Where is thy wisdom of yesterday, which taught thee so truly to discern that the ways of destiny are often ruled to our advantage, though in opposition to our wishes?"

"You remind me—you remind me," said the King hastily, "of one specific falsehood. You foretold, yonder Scot should accomplish his enterprise fortunately for my interest and honour; and thou knowest it has so terminated, that no more mortal injury could I have received, than from the impression which the issue of that affair is like to make on the excited brain of the Mad Bull of Burgundy. This is a direct falsehood—Thou canst plead no evasion here—canst refer to no remote favourable turn of the tide, for which, like an idiot sitting on the bank until the river shall pass away, thou wouldst have me wait contentedly.—Here thy craft deceived thee—Thou wert weak enough to make a specific prediction, which has proved directly false."

"Which will prove most firm and true," answered the Astrologer, boldly. "I would desire no greater triumph of art over ignorance, than that prediction and its accomplishment will afford. I told thee he would be faithful in any honourable commission—Hath he not been so?—I told thee he would be scrupulous in aiding any evil enterprise—Hath he not proved so?—If you doubt it, go ask the Bohemian, Hayraddin Maugrabin."

The King here coloured deeply with shame and anger.

"I told thee," continued the Astrologer, "that the conjunction of planets under which he set forth, augured danger to the person—and hath not his path been beset by danger?—I told thee that it augured an advantage to the sender,—and of that thou wilt soon have the benefit."

"Soon have the benefit!" exclaimed the King; "Have I not the result already, in disgrace and imprisonment?"

"No," answered the Astrologer, "the End is not as yet—thine own tongue shall ere long confess the benefit which thou hast received, from the manner in which the messenger bore himself in discharging thy commission."

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"This is too—too insolent," said the King, "at once to deceive and to insult—But hence!—think not my wrongs shall be unavenged.—*There is a Heaven above us!*"

Galeotti turned to depart. "Yet stop," said Louis—"thou bearest thine imposture bravely out—Let me hear your answer to one question, and think ere you speak.—Can thy pretended skill ascertain the hour of thine own death?"

"Only by referring to the fate of another," said Galeotti.

"I understand not thine answer," said Louis.

"Know then, O King," said Martius, "that this only I can tell with certainty concerning mine own death, that it shall take place exactly twenty-four hours before that of your Majesty."*

"Ha! sayest thou?" said Louis, his countenance again altering.—"Hold—hold—go not—wait one moment.—Saidst thou, *my* death should follow *thine* so closely?"

"Within the space of twenty-four hours," repeated Galeotti, firmly, "if there be one sparkle of true divination in those bright and mysterious intelligences, which speak each on their courses, though without a tongue. I wish your Majesty good rest."

"Hold—hold—go not," said the King, taking him by the arm, and leading him from the door. "Martius Galeotti, I have been a kind master to thee—enriched thee—made thee my friend—my companion—the instructor of my studies.—Be open with me, I entreat you.—Is there aught in this art of yours in very deed?—Shall this Scot's mission be, in fact, propitious to me?—And is the measure of our lives so very—*very* nearly matched? Confess, my good Martius, you speak after the trick of your trade—Confess, I pray you, and you shall have no displeasure at my hand. I am in years—a prisoner—likely to be deprived of a kingdom—to one in my condition truth is worth kingdoms, and it is from thee, dearest Martius, that I must look for this inestimable jewel."

"And I have laid it before your Majesty," said Galeotti, "at the risk that, in brutal passion, you might turn upon me and rend me."

"Who, I, Galeotti?" replied Louis, mildly. "Alas! thou mistakest me!—Am I not captive,—and should not I be patient, especially since my anger can only show my impotence!—Tell me then in sincerity—Have you fooled me?—Or is your science true, and do you truly report it?"

* Note R. Martius Galeotti.

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"Your Majesty will forgive me if I reply to you," said Martius Galeotti, "that time only—time and the event, will convince incredulity. It suits ill the place of confidence which I have held at the council-table of the renowned conqueror, Matthias Corvinus of Hungary—nay, in the cabinet of the Emperor himself—to reiterate assurances of that which I have advanced as true. If you will not believe me, I can but refer to the course of events. A day or two days' patience, will prove or disprove what I have averred concerning the young Scot; and I will be contented to die on the wheel, and have my limbs broken joint by joint, if your Majesty have not advantage, and that in a most important degree, from the dauntless conduct of that Quentin Durward. But if I were to die under such tortures, it would be well your Majesty should seek a ghostly father; for, from the moment my last groan is drawn, only twenty-four hours will remain to you for confession and penitence."

Louis continued to keep hold of Galeotti's robe as he led him towards the door, and pronounced, as he opened it, in a loud voice, "To-morrow we'll talk more of this. Go in peace, my learned father—*Go in peace—Go in peace!*"

He repeated these words three times; and still afraid that the Provost-Marshal might mistake his purpose, he led the Astrologer into the hall, holding fast his robe, as if afraid that he should be torn from him, and put to death before his eyes. He did not unloose his grasp until he had not only repeated again and again the gracious phrase, "Go in peace," but even made a private signal to the Provost-Marshal, to enjoin a suspension of all proceedings against the person of the Astrologer.

Thus did the possession of some secret information, joined to audacious courage and readiness of wit, save Galeotti from the most imminent danger; and thus was Louis, the most sagacious as well as the most vindictive, amongst the monarchs of the period, cheated of his revenge by the influence of superstition upon a selfish temper, and a mind to which, from the consciousness of many crimes, the fear of death was peculiarly terrible.

He felt, however, considerable mortification at being obliged to relinquish his purposed vengeance; and the disappointment seemed to be shared by his satellites, to whom the execution was to have been committed. Le Balafré alone, perfectly indifferent on the subject, so soon as the countermanding signal

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was given, left the door at which he had posted himself, and in a few minutes was fast asleep.

The Provost-Marshal, as the group reclined themselves to repose in the hall after the King retired to his bedchamber, continued to eye the goodly form of the Astrologer, with the look of a mastiff watching a joint of meat which the cook had retrieved from his jaws, while his attendants communicated to each other in brief sentences their characteristic sentiments.

"The poor blinded necromancer," whispered Trois-Eschelles, with an air of spiritual unction and commiseration, to his comrade, Petit-André, "hath lost the fairest chance of expiating some of his vile sorceries, by dying through means of the cord of the blessed Saint Francis! and I had purpose, indeed, to leave the comfortable noose around his neck, to scare the foul fiend from his unhappy carcass."

"And I," said Petit-André, "have missed the rarest opportunity of knowing how far a weight of seventeen stone will stretch a three-plied cord!—It would have been a glorious experiment in our line,—and the jolly old boy would have died so easily!"

While this whispered dialogue was going forward, Martius, who had taken the opposite side of the huge stone fireplace, round which the whole group was assembled, regarded them askance, and with a look of suspicion. He first put his hand into his vest, and satisfied himself that the handle of a very sharp double-edged poniard, which he always carried about him, was disposed conveniently for his grasp; for, as we have already noticed, he was, though now somewhat unwieldy, a powerful, athletic man, and prompt and active at the use of his weapon. Satisfied that this trusty instrument was in readiness, he next took from his bosom a scroll of parchment, inscribed with Greek characters, and marked with cabalistic signs, drew together the wood in the fireplace, and made a blaze by which he could distinguish the features and attitude of all who sat or lay around,—the heavy and deep slumbers of the Scottish soldier, who lay motionless, with his rough countenance as immovable as if it were cast in bronze—the pale and anxious face of Oliver, who at one time assumed the appearance of slumber, and again opened his eyes and raised his head hastily, as if stung by some internal throe, or awakened

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by some distant sound—the discontented, savage, bull-dog aspect of the Provost, who looked

——— "frustrate of his will,
Not half sufficed, and greedy yet to kill"—

while the background was filled up by the ghastly, hypocritical countenance of Trois-Eschelles, whose eyes were cast up towards Heaven, as if he was internally saying his devotions; and the grim drollery of Petit-André, who amused himself with mimicking the gestures and wry faces of his comrade before he betook himself to sleep.

Amidst these vulgar and ignoble countenances, nothing could show to greater advantage than the stately form, handsome mien, and commanding features of the Astrologer, who might have passed for one of the ancient magi, imprisoned in a den of robbers, and about to invoke a spirit to accomplish his liberation. And, indeed, had he been distinguished by nothing else than the beauty of the graceful and flowing beard which descended over the mysterious roll which he held in his hand, one might have been pardoned for regretting that so noble an appendage had been bestowed on one who put both talents, learning, and the advantages of eloquence, and a majestic person, to the mean purposes of a cheat and an impostor.

Thus passed the night in Count Herbert's Tower, in the Castle of Peronne. When the first light of dawn penetrated the ancient Gothic chamber, the King summoned Oliver to his presence, who found the Monarch sitting in his nightgown, and was astonished at the alteration which one night of mortal anxiety had made in his looks. He would have expressed some anxiety on the subject, but the King silenced him by entering into a statement of the various modes by which he had previously endeavoured to form friends at the Court of Burgundy, and which Oliver was charged to prosecute so soon as he should be permitted to stir abroad.

And never was that wily minister more struck with the clearness of the King's intellect, and his intimate knowledge of all the springs which influence human actions, than he was during that memorable consultation.

About two hours afterwards, Oliver accordingly obtained permission from the Count of Crèvecœur to go out and execute

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the commissions which his master had intrusted him with; and Louis, sending for the Astrologer, in whom he seemed to have renewed his faith, held with him, in like manner, a long consultation, the issue of which appeared to give him more spirits and confidence than he had at first exhibited; so that he dressed himself, and received the morning compliments of Crèvecœur with a calmness, at which the Burgundian Lord could not help wondering, the rather that he had already heard that the Duke had passed several hours in a state of mind which seemed to render the King's safety very precarious.

CHAPTER THIRTIETH.

UNCERTAINTY.

Our counsels waver like the unsteady bark,
That reels amid the strife of meeting currents.
OLD PLAY.

If the night passed by Louis was carefully anxious and agitated, that spent by the Duke of Burgundy, who had at no time the same mastery over his passions, and, indeed, who permitted them almost a free and uncontrolled dominion over his actions, was still more disturbed.

According to the custom of the period, two of his principal and most favoured counsellors, D'Hymbercourt and Des Comines, shared his bedchamber, couches being prepared for them near the bed of the prince. Their attendance was never more necessary than upon this night, when, distracted by sorrow, by passion, by the desire of revenge, and by the sense of honour, which forbade him to exercise it upon Louis in his present condition, the Duke's mind resembled a volcano in eruption, which throws forth all the different contents of the mountain, mingled and molten into one burning mass.

He refused to throw off his clothes, or to make any preparation for sleep; but spent the night in a succession of the most violent bursts of passion. In some paroxysms he talked incessantly to his attendants so thick and so rapidly, that they were really afraid his senses would give way; choosing for his theme,

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the merits and the kindness of heart of the murdered Bishop of Liege, and recalling all the instances of mutual kindness, affection, and confidence, which had passed between them, until he had worked himself into such a transport of grief that he threw himself upon his face in the bed, and seemed ready to choke with the sobs and tears which he endeavoured to stifle. Then, starting from the couch, he gave vent at once to another and more furious mood, and traversed the room hastily, uttering incoherent threats, and still more incoherent oaths of vengeance, while, stamping with his foot, according to his customary action, he invoked Saint George, Saint Andrew, and whomsoever else he held most holy, to bear witness, that he would take bloody vengeance on De la Marck, on the people of Liege, and on *him* who was the author of the whole.—These last threats, uttered more obscurely than the others, obviously concerned the person of the King; and at one time the Duke expressed his determination to send for the Duke of Normandy, the brother of the King, and with whom Louis was on the worst terms, in order to compel the captive monarch to surrender either the Crown itself, or some of its most valuable rights and appanages.

Another day and night passed in the same stormy and fitful deliberations, or rather rapid transitions of passion; for the Duke scarcely ate or drank, never changed his dress, and, altogether, demeaned himself like one in whom rage might terminate in utter insanity. By degrees he became more composed, and began to hold, from time to time, consultations with his ministers, in which much was proposed, but nothing resolved on. Comines assures us, that at one time a courier was mounted in readiness to depart for the purpose of summoning the Duke of Normandy; and in that event, the prison of the French monarch would probably have been found, as in similar cases, a brief road to his grave.

At other times, when Charles had exhausted his fury, he sat with his features fixed in stern and rigid immobility, like one who broods over some desperate deed, to which he is as yet unable to work up his resolution. And unquestionably it would have needed little more than an insidious hint from any of the counsellors who attended his person, to have pushed the Duke to some very desperate action. But the nobles of Burgundy, from the sacred character attached to the person of a

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King, and a Lord Paramount, and from a regard to the public faith, as well as that of their Duke, which had been pledged when Louis threw himself into their power, were almost unanimously inclined to recommend moderate measures; and the arguments which D'Hymbercourt and Des Comines had now and then ventured to insinuate during the night, were, in the cooler hours of the next morning, advanced and urged by Crèvecœur and others. Possibly their zeal in behalf of the King might not be entirely disinterested. Many, as we have mentioned, had already experienced the bounty of the King; others had either estates or pretensions in France, which placed them a little under his influence; and it is certain that the treasure, which had loaded four mules when the King entered Peronne, became much lighter in the course of these negotiations.

In the course of the third day, the Count of Campo-basso brought his Italian wit to assist the councils of Charles; and well was it for Louis that he had not arrived when the Duke was in his first fury. Immediately on his arrival, a regular meeting of the Duke's counsellors was convened, for considering the measures to be adopted in this singular crisis.

On this occasion, Campo-basso gave his opinion, couched in the apologue of the Traveller, the Adder, and the Fox; and reminded the Duke of the advice which Reynard gave to the man, that he should crush his mortal enemy, now that chance had placed his fate at his disposal. Des Comines, who saw the Duke's eyes sparkle at a proposal which his own violence of temper had already repeatedly suggested, hastened to state the possibility that Louis might not be, in fact, so directly accessary to the sanguinary action which had been committed at Schonwaldt; that he might be able to clear himself of the imputation laid to his charge, and perhaps to make other atonement for the distractions which his intrigues had occasioned in the Duke's dominions, and those of his allies; and that an act of violence perpetrated on the King, was sure to bring both on France and Burgundy a train of the most unhappy consequences, among which not the least to be feared was, that the English might avail themselves of the commotions and civil discord which must needs ensue, to repossess themselves of Normandy and Guyenne, and renew those dreadful wars, which had only, and with difficulty, been terminated by

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the union of both France and Burgundy against the common enemy. Finally, he confessed that he did not mean to urge the absolute and free dismissal of Louis; but only that the Duke should avail himself no farther of his present condition, than merely to establish a fair and equitable treaty between the countries, with such security on the King's part, as should make it difficult for him to break his faith, or disturb the internal peace of Burgundy in future. D'Hymbercourt, Crèvecœur, and others, signified their reprobation of the violent measures proposed by Campo-basso, and their opinion, that in the way of treaty more permanent advantages could be obtained, and in a manner more honourable for Burgundy, than by an action which would stain her with a breach of faith and hospitality.

The Duke listened to these arguments with his looks fixed on the ground, and his brows so knitted together as to bring his bushy eyebrows into one mass. But when Crèvecœur proceeded to say, that he did not believe Louis either knew of, or was accessary to, the atrocious act of violence committed at Schonwaldt, Charles raised his head, and darting a fierce look at his counsellor, exclaimed, "Have you too, Crèvecœur, heard the gold of France clink?—Methinks it rings in my councils as merrily as ever the bells of Saint Denis—Dare any one say that Louis is not the fomenter of these feuds in Flanders?"

"My gracious lord," said Crèvecœur, "my hand has ever been more conversant with steel than with gold; and so far am I from holding that Louis is free from the charge of having caused the disturbances in Flanders, that it is not long since, in the face of his whole Court, I charged him with that breach of faith, and offered him defiance in your name. But although his intrigues have been doubtless the original cause of these commotions, I am so far from believing that he authorised the death of the Archbishop, that I believe one of his emissaries publicly protested against it; and I could produce the man, were it your Grace's pleasure to see him."

"It *is* our pleasure," said the Duke. "Saint George! can you doubt that we desire to act justly? Even in the highest flight of our passion we are known for an upright and a just judge. We will see France ourself—we will ourself charge him with our wrongs, and ourself state to him the reparation which we expect and demand. If he shall be found guiltless

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of this murder, the atonement for other crimes may be more easy—If he hath been guilty, who shall say that a life of penitence in some retired monastery were not a most deserved and a most merciful doom?—Who," he added, kindling, as he spoke, "who shall dare to blame a revenge yet more direct and more speedy?—Let your witness attend—We will to the Castle at the hour before noon. Some articles we will minute down with which he shall comply, or woe on his head! others shall depend upon the proof. Break up the council, and dismiss yourselves. I will but change my dress, as this is scarce a fitting trim in which to wait on *my most gracious Sovereign.*"

With a deep and bitter emphasis on the last expression, the Duke arose and strode out of the room.

"Louis's safety, and, what is worse, the honour of Burgundy, depend on a cast of the dice," said D'Hymbercourt to Crèvecœur and to Des Comines—"Haste thee to the Castle, Des Comines—thou hast a better filed tongue than either Crèvecœur or I. Explain to Louis what storm is approaching—he will best know how to pilot himself. I trust this life-guardsman will say nothing which can aggravate; for who knows what may have been the secret commission with which he was charged?"

"The young man," said Crèvecœur, "seems bold, yet prudent and wary far beyond his years. In all which he said to me he was tender of the King's character, as of that of the Prince whom he serves. I trust he will be equally so in the Duke's presence. I must go seek him, and also the young Countess of Croye."

"The Countess!—you told us you had left her at Saint Bridget's Nunnery."

"Ay, but I was obliged," said the Count, "to send for her express, by the Duke's orders; and she has been brought hither on a litter, as being unable to travel otherwise. She was in a state of the deepest distress, both on account of the uncertainty of the fate of her kinswoman, the Lady Hameline, and the gloom which overhangs her own; guilty as she has been of a feudal delinquency, in withdrawing herself from the protection of her liege lord, Duke Charles, who is not the person in the world most likely to view with indifference what trenches on his seignorial rights."

The information that the young Countess was in the hands of Charles, added fresh and more pointed thorns to Louis's

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reflections. He was conscious that, by explaining the intrigues by which he had induced the Lady Hameline and her to resort to Plessis, she might supply that evidence which he had removed by the execution of Zamet Maugrabin; and he knew well how much such proof of his having interfered with the rights of the Duke of Burgundy would furnish both motive and pretext for Charles's availing himself to the uttermost of his present predicament.

Louis discoursed on these matters with great anxiety to the Sieur des Comines, whose acute and political talents better suited the King's temper than the blunt martial character of Crèvecœur, or the feudal haughtiness of D'Hymbercourt.

"These iron-handed soldiers, my good friend Comines," he said to his future historian, "should never enter a King's cabinet, but be left with the halberds and partisans in the antechamber. Their hands are indeed made for our use, but the monarch who puts their heads to any better occupation than that of anvils for his enemies' swords and maces, ranks with the fool who presented his mistress with a dog-leash for a carcanet. It is with such as thou, Philip, whose eyes are gifted with the quick and keen sense that sees beyond the exterior surface of affairs, that Princes should share their council-table, their cabinet—what do I say?—the most secret recesses of their soul."

Des Comines, himself so keen a spirit, was naturally gratified with the approbation of the most sagacious Prince in Europe; and he could not so far disguise his internal satisfaction, but that Louis was aware he had made some impression on him.

"I would," continued he, "that I had such a servant, or rather that I were worthy to have such a one! I had not then been in this unfortunate situation; which, nevertheless, I should hardly regret, could I but discover any means of securing the services of so experienced a statist."

Des Comines said, that all his faculties, such as they were, were at the service of his Most Christian Majesty, saving always his allegiance to his rightful lord, Duke Charles of Burgundy.

"And am I one who would seduce you from that allegiance?" said Louis, pathetically. "Alas! am I not now endangered by having reposed too much confidence in my vassal? and can the cause of feudal good faith be more sacred with any than with me, whose safety depends on an appeal to it?—No, Philip des

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Comines—continue to serve Charles of Burgundy; and you will best serve him, by bringing round a fair accommodation with Louis of France. In doing thus, you will serve us both, and one, at least, will be grateful. I am told your appointments in this Court hardly match those of the Grand Falconer; and thus the services of the wisest counsellor in Europe are put on a level, or rather ranked below, those of a fellow who feeds and physics kites! France has wide lands—her King has much gold. Allow me, my friend, to rectify this scandalous inequality. The means are not distant—Permit me to use them."

The King produced a weighty bag of money; but Des Comines, more delicate in his sentiments than most courtiers of that time, declined the proffer, declaring himself perfectly satisfied with the liberality of his native Prince, and assuring Louis that his desire to serve him could not be increased by the acceptance of any such gratuity as he had proposed.

"Singular man!" exclaimed the King; "let me embrace the only courtier of his time, at once capable and incorruptible. Wisdom is to be desired more than fine gold; and, believe me, I trust in thy kindness, Philip, at this pinch, more than I do in the purchased assistance of many who have received my gifts. I know you will not counsel your master to abuse such an opportunity, as fortune, and, to speak plain, Des Comines, as my own folly, has afforded him."

"To *abuse* it, by no means," answered the historian; "but most certainly to *use* it."

"How, and in what degree?" said Louis. "I am not ass enough to expect that I shall escape without some ransom—but let it be a reasonable one—reason I am ever willing to listen to at Paris or at Plessis, equally as at Peronne."

"Ah, but if it like your Majesty," replied Des Comines, "Reason at Paris or Plessis was used to speak in so low and soft a tone of voice, that she could not always gain an audience of your Majesty—at Peronne she borrows the speaking-trumpet of Necessity, and her voice becomes lordly and imperative."

"You are figurative," said Louis, unable to restrain an emotion of peevishness; "I am a dull, blunt man, Sir of Comines. I pray you leave your tropes, and come to plain ground. What does your Duke expect of me?"

"I am the bearer of no propositions, my lord," said Des Comines; "the Duke will soon explain his own pleasure; but

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some things occur to me as proposals, for which your Majesty ought to hold yourself prepared. As, for example, the final cession of these towns here upon the Somme."

"I expected so much," said Louis.

"That you should disown the Liegeois, and William de la Marck."

"As willingly as I disclaim Hell and Satan," said Louis.

"Ample security will be required, by hostages, or occupation of fortresses, or otherwise, that France shall in future abstain from stirring up rebellion among the Flemings."

"It is something new," answered the King, "that a vassal should demand pledges from his Sovereign; but let that pass too."

"A suitable and independent appanage for your illustrious brother, the ally and friend of my master—Normandy or Champagne. The Duke loves your father's house, my liege."

"So well," answered Louis, "that, *mort Dieu!* he's about to make them all kings.—Is your budget of hints yet emptied?"

"Not entirely," answered the counsellor: "it will certainly be required that your Majesty will forbear molesting, as you have done of late, the Duke de Bretagne, and that you will no longer contest the right which he and other grand feudatories have, to strike money, to term themselves dukes and princes by the grace of God"——

"In a word, to make so many kings of my vassals. Sir Philip, would you make a fratricide of me?—You remember well my brother Charles—he was no sooner Duke of Guyenne than he died.—And what will be left to the descendant and representative of Charlemagne, after giving away these rich provinces, save to be smeared with oil at Rheims, and to eat his dinner under a high canopy?"

"We will diminish your Majesty's concern on that score, by giving you a companion in that solitary exaltation," said Philip des Comines.—The Duke of Burgundy, though he claims not at present the title of an independent king, desires nevertheless to be freed in future from the abject marks of subjection required of him to the crown of France;—it is his purpose to close his ducal coronet with an imperial arch, and surmount it with a globe, in emblem that his dominions are independent."

"And how dares the Duke of Burgundy, the sworn vassal of France," exclaimed Louis, starting up, and showing an unwonted

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degree of emotion—"how dares he propose such terms to his Sovereign, as, by every law of Europe, should infer a forfeiture of his fief?"

"The doom of forfeiture it would in this case be difficult to enforce," answered Des Comines, calmly.—"Your Majesty is aware, that the strict interpretation of the feudal law is becoming obsolete even in the Empire, and that superior and vassal endeavour to mend their situation in regard to each other, as they have power and opportunity.—Your Majesty's interferences with the Duke's vassals in Flanders will prove an exculpation of my master's conduct, supposing him to insist that, by enlarging his independence, France should in future be debarred from any pretext of doing so."

"Comines, Comines!" said Louis, arising again, and pacing the room in a pensive manner, "this is a dreadful lesson on the text *Væ victis!*—You cannot mean that the Duke will insist on all these hard conditions?"

"At least I would have your Majesty be in a condition to discuss them all."

"Yet moderation, Des Comines, moderation in success, is—no one knows better than you—necessary to its ultimate advantage."

"So please your Majesty, the merit of moderation is, I have observed, most apt to be extolled by the losing party. The winner holds in more esteem the prudence which calls on him not to leave an opportunity unimproved."

"Well, we will consider"—replied the King; "but at least thou hast reached the extremity of your Duke's unreasonable exaction? there can remain nothing—or if there does, for so thy brow intimates—what is it—what indeed can it be—unless it be my crown? which these previous demands, if granted, will deprive of all its lustre?"

"My lord," said Des Comines, "what remains to be mentioned, is a thing partly—indeed in a great measure—within the Duke's own power, though he means to invite your Majesty's accession to it, for in truth it touches you nearly."

"*Pasques Dieu!*" exclaimed the King, impatiently, "what is it?—Speak out, Sir Philip—am I to send him my daughter for a concubine, or what other dishonour is he to put on me?"

"No dishonour, my liege; but your Majesty's cousin, the illustrious Duke of Orleans"——

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"Ha!" exclaimed the King; but Des Comines proceeded without heeding the interruption.

"—Having conferred his affections on the young Countess Isabelle de Croye, the Duke expects your Majesty will, on your part, as he on his, yield your assent to the marriage, and unite with him in endowing the right noble couple with such an appanage, as, joined to the Countess's estates, may form a fit establishment for a Child of France."

"Never, never!" said the King, bursting out into that emotion which he had of late suppressed with much difficulty, and striding about in a disordered haste, which formed the strongest contrast to the self-command which he usually exhibited,—"Never, never!—let them bring scissors, and shear my hair like that of the parish-fool, whom I have so richly resembled!—let them bid the monastery or the grave yawn for me—let them bring red-hot basins to sear my eyes—axe or aconite—whatever they will—but Orleans shall not break his plighted faith to my daughter, or marry another while she lives!"

"Your Majesty," said Des Comines, "ere you set your mind so keenly against what is proposed, will consider your own want of power to prevent it. Every wise man, when he sees a rock giving way, withdraws from the bootless attempt of preventing the fall."

"But a brave man," said Louis, "will at least find his grave beneath it. Des Comines, consider the great loss—the utter destruction, such a marriage would bring upon my kingdom. Recollect, I have but one feeble boy, and this Orleans is the next heir—consider that the church hath consented to his union with Joan, which unites so happily the interests of both branches of my family,—think on all this, and think too that this union has been the favourite scheme of my whole life—that I have schemed for it, fought for it, watched for it, prayed for it,—and sinned for it. Philip des Comines, I will not forego it! Think, man, think!—pity me in this extremity—thy quick brain can speedily find some substitute for this sacrifice—some ram to be offered up instead of that project which is dear to me as the Patriarch's only son was to him. Philip, pity me!—you at least should know, that to men of judgment and foresight, the destruction of the scheme on which they have long dwelt, and for which they have long toiled, is more inexpressibly bitter than the transient grief of ordinary men, whose pursuits are but

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the gratification of some temporary passion—you, who know how to sympathise with the deeper, the more genuine distress of baffled prudence and disappointed sagacity,—will you not feel for me?"

"My Lord and King!" replied Des Comines, "I do sympathise with your distress in so far as duty to my master"——

"Do not mention him!" said Louis, acting, or at least appearing to act, under an irresistible and headlong impulse, which withdrew the usual guard which he maintained over his language—"Charles of Burgundy is unworthy of your attachment. He who can insult and strike his counsellors—he who can distinguish the wisest and most faithful among them, by the opprobrious name of Booted-Head!"——

The wisdom of Philip des Comines did not prevent his having a high sense of personal consequence; and he was so much struck with the words which the King uttered, as it were, in the career of a passion which overleaped ceremony, that he could only reply by repetition of the words "Booted-Head! It is impossible that my master the Duke could have so termed the servant who has been at his side since he could mount a palfrey—and that too before a foreign monarch?—it is impossible!"

Louis instantly saw the impression he had made, and avoiding alike a tone of condolence, which might have seemed insulting, and one of sympathy, which might have savoured of affectation, he said, with simplicity and at the same time with dignity, "My misfortunes make me forget my courtesy, else I had not spoken to you of what it must be unpleasant for you to hear. But you have in reply taxed me with having uttered impossibilities—this touches my honour; yet I must submit to the charge, if I tell you not the circumstances which the Duke, laughing until his eyes ran over, assigned for the origin of that opprobrious name, which I will not offend your ears by repeating. Thus, then, it chanced. You, Sir Philip des Comines, were at a hunting-match with the Duke of Burgundy, your master; and when he alighted after the chase, he required your services in drawing off his boots. Reading in your looks, perhaps, some natural resentment of this disparaging treatment, he ordered you to sit down in turn, and rendered you the same office he had just received from you. But offended at your understanding him literally, he no sooner plucked one of your boots off, than he brutally beat it about your head till the blood flowed, exclaiming

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against the insolence of a subject who had the presumption to accept of such a service at the hand of his Sovereign; and hence he, or his privileged fool, Le Glorieux, is in the current habit of distinguishing you by the absurd and ridiculous name of *Tête botté*, which makes one of the Duke's most ordinary subjects of pleasantry."*

While Louis thus spoke, he had the double pleasure of galling to the quick the person whom he addressed—an exercise which it was in his nature to enjoy, even where he had not, as in the present case, the apology, that he did so in pure retaliation—and that of observing that he had at length been able to find a point in Des Comines' character which might lead him gradually from the interests of Burgundy to those of France. But although the deep resentment which the offended courtier entertained against his master induced him at a future period to exchange the service of Charles for that of Louis, yet, at the present moment, he was contented to throw out only some general hints of his friendly inclination towards France, which he well knew the King would understand how to interpret. And indeed it would be unjust to stigmatise the memory of the excellent historian with the desertion of his master on this occasion, although he was certainly now possessed with sentiments much more favourable to Louis than when he entered the apartment.

He constrained himself to laugh at the anecdote which Louis had detailed, and then added, "I did not think so trifling a frolic would have dwelt on the mind of the Duke so long as to make it worth telling again. Some such passage there was of drawing off boots and the like, as your Majesty knows that the Duke is fond of rude play; but it has been much exaggerated in his recollection. Let it pass on."

"Ay, *let* it pass on," said the King; "it is indeed shame it should have detained us a minute.—And now, Sir Philip, I hope you are French so far as to afford me your best counsel in these difficult affairs. You have, I am well aware, the clew to the labyrinth, if you would but impart it."

* The story is told more bluntly, and less probably, in the French memoirs of the period, which affirm that Comines, out of a presumption inconsistent with his excellent good sense, had asked of Charles of Burgundy to draw off his boots, without having been treated with any previous familiarity to lead to such a freedom. I have endeavoured to give the anecdote a turn more consistent with the sense and prudence of the great author concerned.

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"Your Majesty may command my best advice and service," replied Des Comines, "under reservation always of my duty to my own master."

This was nearly what the courtier had before stated; but he now repeated it in a tone so different, that whereas Louis understood from the former declaration that the reserved duty to Burgundy was the prime thing to be considered, so he now saw clearly that the emphasis was reversed, and that more weight was now given by the speaker to his promise of counsel, than to a restriction which seemed interposed for the sake of form and consistency. The King resumed his own seat, and compelled Des Comines to sit by him, listening at the same time to that statesman, as if the words of an oracle sounded in his ears. Des Comines spoke in that low and impressive tone which implies at once great sincerity and some caution, and at the same time so slowly, as if he was desirous that the King should weigh and consider each individual word as having its own peculiar and determined meaning. "The things," he said, "which I have suggested for your Majesty's consideration, harsh as they sound in your ear, are but substitutes for still more violent proposals brought forward in the Duke's counsels by such as are more hostile to your Majesty. And I need scarce remind your Majesty, that the more direct and more violent suggestions find readiest acceptance with our master, who loves brief and dangerous measures better than those that are safe, but at the same time circuitous."

"I remember"—said the King. "I have seen him swim a river at the risk of drowning, though there was a bridge to be found for riding two hundred yards round."

"True, Sire; and he that weighs not his life against the gratification of a moment of impetuous passion, will, on the same impulse, prefer the gratification of his will to the increase of his substantial power."

"Most true," replied the King; "a fool will ever grasp rather at the appearance than the reality of authority. All this I know to be true of Charles of Burgundy. But, my dear friend, Des Comines, what do you infer from these premises?"

"Simply this, my lord," answered the Burgundian, "that as your Majesty has seen a skilful angler control a large and heavy fish, and finally draw him to land by a single hair, which fish had broke through a tackle tenfold stronger, had the fisher presumed

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to strain the line on him, instead of giving him head enough for all his wild flourishes; even so your Majesty, by gratifying the Duke in these particulars on which he has pitched his ideas of honour, and the gratification of his revenge, may evade many of the other unpalatable propositions at which I have hinted; and which—including, I must state openly to your Majesty, some of those through which France would be most especially weakened—will slide out of his remembrance and attention, and, being referred to subsequent conferences and future discussion, may be altegether eluded."

"I understand you, my good Sir Philip; but to the matter," said the King. "To which of those happy propositions is your Duke so much wedded that contradiction will make him unreasonable and intractable?"

"To any or to all of them, if it please your Majesty, on which you may happen to contradict him. This is precisely what your Majesty must avoid; and, to take up my former parable, you must needs remain on the watch, ready to give the Duke line enough whenever he shoots away under the impulse of his rage. His fury, already considerably abated, will waste itself if he be unopposed, and you will presently find him become more friendly and more tractable."

"Still," said the King, musing, "there must be some particular demands which lie deeper at my cousin's heart than the other proposals. Were I but aware of these, Sir Philip"——

"Your Majesty may make the lightest of his demands the most important, simply by opposing it," said Des Comines; "nevertheless, my lord, thus far I can say, that every shadow of treaty will be broken off if your Majesty renounce not William de la Marck and the Liegeois."

"I have already said that I will disown them," said the King, "and well they deserve it at my hand; the villains have commenced their uproar at a moment that might have cost me my life."

"He that fires a train of powder," replied the historian, "must expect a speedy explosion of the mine.—But more than mere disavowal of their cause will be expected of your Majesty by Duke Charles; for know, that he will demand your Majesty's assistance to put the insurrection down, and your royal presence to witness the punishment which he destines for the rebels."

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"That may scarce consist with our honour, Des Comines," said the King.

"To refuse it will scarcely consist with your Majesty's safety," replied Des Comines. "Charles is determined to show the people of Flanders that no hope, nay, no promise of assistance from France, will save them in their mutinies from the wrath and vengeance of Burgundy."

"But, Sir Philip, I will speak plainly," answered the King—"Could we but procrastinate the matter, might not these rogues of Liege make their own part good against Duke Charles? The knaves are numerous and steady—Can they not hold out their town against him?"

"With the help of the thousand archers of France whom your Majesty promised them, they might have done something; but"——

"Whom I promised them!" said the King—"Alas! good Sir Philip! you much wrong me in saying so."

"—But without whom," continued Des Comines, not heeding the interruption—"as your Majesty will not *now* likely find it convenient to supply them—what chance will the burghers have of making good their town, in whose walls the large breaches made by Charles after the battle of St. Tron are still unrepaired; so that the lances of Hainault, Brabant, and Burgundy, may advance to the attack twenty men in front?"

"The improvident idiots!" said the King—"If they have thus neglected their own safety, they deserve not my protection. Pass on—I will make no quarrel for their sake."

"The next point, I fear, will sit closer to your Majesty's heart," said Des Comines.

"Ah!" replied the King, "you mean that infernal marriage! I will not consent to the breach of the contract betwixt my daughter Joan and my cousin of Orleans—it would be wresting the sceptre of France from me and my posterity; for that feeble boy the Dauphin is a blighted blossom, which will wither without fruit. This match between Joan and Orleans has been my thought by day, my dream by night—I tell thee, Sir Philip, I cannot give it up!—Besides, it is inhuman to require me, with my own hand, to destroy at once my own scheme of policy, and the happiness of a pair brought up for each other."

"Are they then so much attached?" said Des Comines.

"One of them at least is," said the King, "and the one for

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whom I am bound to be most anxious. But you smile, Sir Philip—you are no believer in the force of love."

"Nay," said Des Comines, "if it please you, Sire, I am so little an infidel in that particular, that I was about to ask whether it would reconcile you in any degree to your acquiescing in the proposed marriage betwixt the Duke of Orleans and Isabelle de Croye, were I to satisfy you that the Countess's inclinations are so much fixed on another, that it is likely it will never be a match?"

King Louis sighed.—"Alas!" he said, "my good and dear friend, from what sepulchre have you drawn such dead man's comfort? *Her* inclinations, indeed!—Why, to speak truth, supposing that Orleans detested my daughter Joan, yet, but for this ill-ravelled web of mischance, he must needs have married her; so you may conjecture how little chance there is of this damsel being able to refuse him under a similar compulsion, and he a Child of France besides.—Ah, no, Philip!—little fear of her standing obstinate against the suit of such a lover.—*Varium et mutabile*, Philip."

"Your Majesty may, in the present instance, undervalue the obstinate courage of this young lady. She comes of a race determinately wilful; and I have picked out of Crèvecœur that she has formed a romantic attachment to a young squire, who, to say truth, rendered her many services on the road."

"Ha!" said the King,—"an archer of my Guards, by name Quentin Durward?"

"The same, as I think," said Des Comines; "he was made prisoner along with the Countess, travelling almost alone together."

"Now, our Lord and our Lady, and Monseigneur Saint Martin, and Monseigneur Saint Julian, be praised every one of them!" said the King, "and all laud and honour to the learned Galeotti, who read in the stars that this youth's destiny was connected with mine! If the maiden be so attached to him as to make her refractory to the will of Burgundy, this Quentin hath indeed been rarely useful to me."

"I believe, my lord," answered the Burgundian, "according to Crèvecœur's report, that there is some chance of her being sufficiently obstinate; besides, doubtless, the noble Duke himself, notwithstanding what your Majesty was pleased to hint in way

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of supposition, will not willingly renounce his fair cousin, to whom he has been long engaged."

"Umph!" answered the King—"But you have never seen my daughter Joan.—A howlet, man!—an absolute owl, whom I am ashamed of! But let him be only a wise man, and marry her, I will give him leave to be mad *par amours* for the fairest lady in France.—And now, Philip, have you given me the full map of your master's mind?"

"I have possessed you, Sire, of those particulars on which he is at present most disposed to insist. But your Majesty well knows that the Duke's disposition is like a sweeping torrent, which only passes smoothly forward when its waves encounter no opposition; and what may be presented to chafe him into fury, it is impossible even to guess. Were more distinct evidence of your Majesty's practices (pardon the phrase, where there is so little time for selection) with the Liegeois and William de la Marck to occur unexpectedly, the issue might be terrible.—There are strange news from that country—they say La Marck hath married Hameline the elder Countess of Croye."

"That old fool was so mad on marriage, that she would have accepted the hand of Satan," said the King; "but that La Marck, beast as he is, should have married her, rather more surprises me."

"There is a report also," continued Des Comines, "that an envoy, or herald, on La Marck's part, is approaching Peronne; this is like to drive the Duke frantic with rage—I trust that he has no letters, or the like, to show on your Majesty's part?"

"Letters to a Wild Boar!" answered the King.—"No, no, Sir Philip, I was no such fool as to cast pearls before swine.—What little intercourse I had with the brute animal was by message, in which I always employed such low-bred slaves and vagabonds, that their evidence would not be received in a trial for robbing a hen-roost."

"I can then only farther recommend," said Des Comines, taking his leave, "that your Majesty should remain on your guard, be guided by events, and, above all, avoid using any language or argument with the Duke which may better become your dignity than your present condition."

"If my dignity," said the King, "grow troublesome to me—which it seldom doth while there are deeper interests to think

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of—I have a special remedy for that swelling of the heart—It is but looking into a certain ruinous closet, Sir Philip, and thinking of the death of Charles the Simple; and it cures me as effectually as the cold bath would cool a fever.—And now, my friend and monitor, must thou be gone? Well, Sir Philip, the time must come when thou wilt tire reading lessons of state policy to the Bull of Burgundy, who is incapable of comprehending your most simple argument—If Louis of Valois then lives, thou hast a friend in the Court of France. I tell thee, my Philip, it would be a blessing to my kingdom should I ever acquire thee; who, with a profound view of subjects of state, hast also a conscience, capable of feeling and discerning between right and wrong. So help me, our Lord and Lady, and Monseigneur Saint Martin, Oliver and Balue have hearts as hardened as the nether millstone; and my life is imbittered by remorse and penances for the crimes they make me commit. Thou, Sir Philip, possessed of the wisdom of present and past time, canst teach how to become great without ceasing to be virtuous."

"A hard task, and which few have attained," said the historian; "but which is yet within the reach of princes, who will strive for it. Meantime, Sire, be prepared, for the Duke will presently confer with you."

Louis looked long after Philip when he left the apartment, and at length burst into a bitter laugh. "He spoke of fishing—I have sent him home a trout properly tickled!—And he thinks himself virtuous because he took no bribe, but contented himself with flattery and promises, and the pleasure of avenging an affront to his vanity!—Why, he is but so much the poorer for the refusal of the money—not a jot the more honest. He must be mine, though, for he hath the shrewdest head among them. Well, now for nobler game! I am to face this leviathan Charles, who will presently swim hitherward, cleaving the deep before him. I must, like a trembling sailor, throw a tub overboard to amuse him. But I may one day find the chance—of driving a harpoon into his entrails!"*

* Note S. Philip des Comines.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-FIRST.

THE INTERVIEW.

Hold fast thy truth, young soldier.—Gentle maiden,
Keep you your promise plight—leave age its subtleties,
And grey-hair'd policy its maze of falsehood;
But be you candid as the morning sky,
Ere the high sun sucks vapours up to stain it.

THE TRIAL.

ON the perilous and important morning which preceded the meeting of the two Princes in the Castle of Peronne, Oliver le Dain did his master the service of an active and skilful agent, making interest for Louis in every quarter, both with presents and promises; so that, when the Duke's anger should blaze forth, all around should be interested to smother, and not to increase, the conflagration. He glided like night, from tent to tent, from house to house, making himself friends, but not in the Apostle's sense, with the Mammon of unrighteousness. As was said of another active political agent, "his finger was in every man's palm, his mouth was in every man's ear;" and for various reasons, some of which we have formerly hinted at, he secured the favour of many Burgundian nobles, who either had something to hope or fear from France, or who thought that, were the power of Louis too much reduced, their own Duke would be likely to pursue the road to despotic authority, to which his heart naturally inclined him, with a daring and unopposed pace.

Where Oliver suspected his own presence or arguments might be less acceptable, he employed that of other servants of the King; and it was in this manner that he obtained, by the favour of the Count de Crèvecœur, an interview betwixt Lord Crawford, accompanied by Le Balafré, and Quentin Durward, who, since he had arrived at Peronne, had been detained in a sort of honourable confinement. Private affairs were assigned as the cause of requesting this meeting; but it is probable that Crèvecœur, who was afraid that his master might be stirred up in passion to do something dishonourably violent towards Louis, was not sorry to afford an opportunity to Craw-

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ford to give some hints to the young Archer, which might prove useful to his master.

The meeting between the countrymen was cordial, and even affecting.

"Thou art a singular youth," said Crawford, stroking the head of young Durward, as a grandsire might do that of his descendant; "Certes, you have had as meikle good fortune as if you had been born with a lucky-hood on your head."

"All comes of his gaining an archer's place at such early years," said Le Balafré; "I never was so much talked of, fair nephew, because I was five-and-twenty years old before I was *hors de page*."

"And an ill-looking mountainous monster of a page thou wert, Ludovic," said the old commander, "with a beard like a baker's shool, and a back like old Wallace Wight."

"I fear," said Quentin, with downcast eyes, "I shall enjoy that title to distinction but a short time—since it is my purpose to resign the service of the Archer-Guard."

Le Balafré was struck almost mute with astonishment, and Crawford's ancient features gleamed with displeasure. The former at length mustered words enough to say, "Resign!—leave your place in the Scottish Archers!—such a thing was never dreamed of. I would not give up my situation, to be made Constable of France."

"Hush! Ludovic," said Crawford; "this youngster knows better how to shape his course with the wind than we of the old world do. His journey hath given him some pretty tales to tell about King Louis; and he is turning Burgundian, that he may make his own little profit by telling them to Duke Charles."

"If I thought so," said Le Balafré, "I would cut his throat with my own hand, were he fifty times my sister's son!"

"But you would first inquire, whether I deserved to be so treated, fair kinsman?" answered Quentin;—"and you, my lord, know that I am no tale-bearer; nor shall either question or torture draw out of me a word to King Louis's prejudice, which may have come to my knowledge while I was in his service.—So far my oath of duty keeps me silent. But I will not remain in that service, in which, besides the perils of fair battle with mine enemies, I am to be exposed to the dangers of ambuscade on the part of my friends."

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"Nay, if he objects to lying in ambuscade," said the slow-witted Le Balafré, looking sorrowfully at the Lord Crawford, "I am afraid, my lord, that all is over with him! I myself have had thirty bushments break upon me, and truly I think I have laid in ambuscade twice as often myself, it being a favourite practice in our King's mode of making war."

"It is so indeed, Ludovic," answered Lord Crawford; "nevertheless, hold your peace, for I believe I understand this gear better than you do."

"I wish to Our Lady you may, my lord," answered Ludovic; "but it wounds me to the very midriff, to think my sister's son should fear an ambushment."

"Young man," said Crawford, "I partly guess your meaning. You have met foul play on the road where you travelled by the King's command, and you think you have reason to charge him with being the author of it."

"I have been threatened with foul play in the execution of the King's commission," answered Quentin; "but I have had the good fortune to elude it—whether his Majesty be innocent or guilty in the matter, I leave to God and his own conscience. He fed me when I was a-hungered—received me when I was a wandering stranger. I will never load him in his adversity with accusations which may indeed be unjust, since I heard them only from the vilest mouths."

"My dear boy—my own lad!" said Crawford, taking him in his arms—"Ye think like a Scot, every joint of you! Like one that will forget a cause of quarrel with a friend whose back is already at the wall, and remember nothing of him but his kindness."

"Since my Lord Crawford has embraced my nephew," said Ludovic Lesly, "I will embrace him also—though I would have you to know, that to understand the service of an ambushment is as necessary to a soldier, as it is to a priest to be able to read his breviary."

"Be hushed, Ludovic," said Crawford; "ye are an ass, my friend, and ken not the blessing Heaven has sent you in this braw callant.—And now tell me, Quentin, my man, hath the King any advice of this brave, Christian, and manly résolution of yours; for, poor man, he had need, in his strait, to ken what he has to reckon upon. Had he but brought the whole brigade

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of Guards with him!—But God's will be done—Kens he of your purpose, think you?"

"I really can hardly tell," answered Quentin; "but I assured his learned Astrologer, Martius Galeotti, of my resolution to be silent on all that could injure the King with the Duke of Burgundy. The particulars which I suspect, I will not (under your favour) communicate even to your lordship; and to the philosopher I was, of course, far less willing to unfold myself."

"Ha!—ay!" answered Lord Crawford—"Oliver did indeed tell me that Galeotti prophesied most stoutly concerning the line of conduct you were to hold; and I am truly glad to find he did so on better authority than the stars."

"*He* prophesy!" said Le Balafré, laughing; "the stars never told him that honest Ludovic Lesly used to help yonder wench of his to spend the fair ducats he flings into her lap."

"Hush! Ludovic," said his captain, "hush! thou beast, man!—If thou dost not respect my grey hairs, because I have been e'en too much of a *routier* myself, respect the boy's youth and innocence, and let us have no more of such unbecoming daffing."

"Your Honour may say your pleasure," answered Ludovic Lesly; "but, by my faith, second-sighted Saunders Souplejaw, the town-souter of Glen-houlakin, was worth Gallotti, or Gallipotty, or whatever ye call him, twice told, for a prophet. He foretold that all my sister's children would die some day; and he foretold it in the very hour that the youngest was born, and that is this lad Quentin—who, no doubt, will one day die, to make up the prophecy—the more's the pity—the whole curney of them is gone but himself. And Saunders foretold to myself one day, that I should be made by marriage, which doubtless will also happen in due time, though it hath not yet come to pass—though how or when, I can hardly guess, as I care not myself for the wedded state, and Quentin is but a lad. Also, Saunders predicted"——

"Nay," said Lord Crawford, "unless the prediction be singularly to the purpose, I must cut you short, my good Ludovic; for both you and I must now leave your nephew, with prayers to Our Lady to strengthen him in the good mind he is in; for this is a case in which a light word might do more mischief than all the Parliament of Paris could mend. My blessing with you, my lad; and be in no hurry to think of leaving our body;

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for there will be good blows going presently in the eye of day, and no ambuscade."

"And my blessing, too, nephew," said Ludovic Lesly; "for, since you have satisfied our most noble captain, I also am satisfied, as in duty bound."

"Stay, my lord," said Quentin, and led Lord Crawford a little apart from his uncle. "I must not forget to mention, that there is a person besides in the world, who, having learned from me these circumstances, which it is essential to King Louis's safety should at present remain concealed, may not think that the same obligation of secrecy, which attaches to me as the King's soldier, and as having been relieved by his bounty, is at all binding on her."

"On *her!*" replied Crawford; "nay, if there be a woman in the secret, the Lord ha' mercy, for we are all on the rocks again!"

"Do not suppose so, my lord," replied Durward, "but use your interest with the Count of Crèvecœur to permit me an interview with the Countess Isabelle of Croye, who is the party possessed of my secret, and I doubt not that I can persuade her to be as silent as I shall unquestionably myself remain, concerning whatever may incense the Duke against King Louis."

The old soldier mused for a long time—looked up to the ceiling, then down again upon the floor—then shook his head, —and at length said, "There is something in all this, which, by my honour, I do not understand. The Countess Isabelle of Croye!—an interview with a lady of her birth, blood, and possessions!—and thou a raw Scottish lad, so certain of carrying thy point with her? Thou art either strangely confident, my young friend, or else you have used your time well upon the journey. But, by the cross of Saint Andrew! I will move Crèvecœur in thy behalf; and, as he truly fears that Duke Charles may be provoked against the King, to the extremity of falling foul, I think it likely he may grant thy request, though, by my honour, it is a comical one!"

So saying, and shrugging up his shoulders, the old lord left the apartment, followed by Ludovic Lesly, who, forming his looks on those of his principal, endeavoured, though knowing nothing of the cause of his wonder, to look as mysterious and important as Crawford himself.

In a few minutes Crawford returned, but without his attend-

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ant, Le Balafré. The old man seemed in singular humour, laughing and chuckling to himself in a manner which strangely distorted his stern and rigid features, and at the same time shaking his head, as at something which he could not help condemning, while he found it irresistibly ludicrous. "My certes, countryman," said he, "but you are not blate—you will never lose fair lady for faint heart! Crèvecœur swallowed your proposal as he would have done a cup of vinegar, and swore to me roundly, by all the saints in Burgundy, that, were less than the honour of princes and the peace of kingdoms at stake, you should never see even so much as the print of the Countess Isabelle's foot on the clay. Were it not that he had a dame, and a fair one, I would have thought that he meant to break a lance for the prize himself. Perhaps he thinks of his nephew, the County Stephen. A Countess!—would no less serve you to be minting at?—But come along—your interview with her must be brief—But I fancy you know how to make the most of little time—ho! ho! ho!—By my faith, I can hardly chide thee for the presumption, I have such a good will to laugh at it!"

With a brow like scarlet, at once offended and disconcerted by the blunt inferences of the old soldier, and vexed at beholding in what an absurd light his passion was viewed by every person of experience, Durward followed Lord Crawford in silence to the Ursuline convent, in which the Countess was lodged, and in the parlour of which he found the Count de Crèvecœur.

"So, young gallant," said the latter, sternly, "you must see the fair companion of your romantic expedition once more, it seems?"

"Yes, my Lord Count," answered Quentin, firmly; "and what is more, I must see her alone."

"That shall never be," said the Count de Crèvecœur.—"Lord Crawford, I make you judge. This young lady, the daughter of my old friend and companion in arms, the richest heiress in Burgundy, has confessed a sort of a—what was I going to say?—in short, she is a fool, and your man-at-arms here a presumptuous coxcomb—In a word, they shall not meet alone."

"Then will I not speak a single word to the Countess in your presence," said Quentin, much delighted. "You have told me much that I did not dare, presumptuous as I may be, even to hope."

"Ay, truly said, my friend," said Crawford. "You have

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been imprudent in your communications; and, since you refer to me, and there is a good stout grating across the parlour, I would advise you to trust to it, and let them do the worst with their tongues. What, man! the life of a King, and many thousands besides, is not to be weighed with the chance of two young things whilly-whawing in ilk other's ears for a minute."

So saying, he dragged off Crèvecœur, who followed very reluctantly, and cast many angry glances at the young Archer as he left the room.

In a moment after, the Countess Isabelle entered on the other side of the grate, and no sooner saw Quentin alone in the parlour, than she stopped short, and cast her eyes on the ground for the space of half-a-minute. "Yet why should I be ungrateful," she said, "because others are unjustly suspicious? —My friend—my preserver, I may almost say, so much have I been beset by treachery—my only faithful and constant friend!"

As she spoke thus, she extended her hand to him through the grate, nay, suffered him to retain it until he had covered it with kisses, not unmingled with tears. She only said, "Durward, were we ever to meet again, I would not permit this folly."

If it be considered that Quentin had guarded her through so many perils—that he had been, in truth, her only faithful and zealous protector, perhaps my fair readers, even if countesses and heiresses should be of the number, will pardon the derogation.

But the Countess extricated her hand at length, and stepping a pace back from the grate, asked Durward, in a very embarrassed tone, what boon he had to ask of her?—"For that you have a request to make, I have learned from the old Scottish Lord, who came here but now with my cousin of Crèvecœur. Let it be but reasonable," she said, "but such as poor Isabelle can grant with duty and honour uninfringed, and you cannot tax my slender powers too highly. But, oh! do not speak hastily,—do not say," she added, looking around with timidity, "aught that might, if overheard, do prejudice to us both!"

"Fear not, noble lady," said Quentin, sorrowfully; "it is not *here* that I can forget the distance which fate has placed between us, or expose you to the censures of your proud kindred, as the object of the most devoted love to one, poorer and less powerful—not perhaps less noble than themselves. Let that

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pass like a dream of the night to all but one bosom, where, dream as it is, it will fill up the room of all existing realities."

"Hush! hush!" said Isabelle; "for your own sake,—for mine,—be silent on such a theme. Tell me rather what it is you have to ask of me."

"Forgiveness to one," replied Quentin, "who, for his own selfish views, hath conducted himself as your enemy."

"I trust I forgive all my enemies," answered Isabelle; "but oh, Durward! through what scenes have your courage and presence of mind protected me!—Yonder bloody hall—the good Bishop—I knew not till yesterday half the horrors I had unconsciously witnessed!"

"Do not think on them," said Quentin, who saw the transient colour which had come to her cheek during their conference, fast fading into the most deadly paleness—"Do not look back, but look steadily forward, as they needs must who walk in a perilous road. Hearken to me. King Louis deserves nothing better at your hand, of all others, than to be proclaimed the wily and insidious politician which he really is. But to tax him as the encourager of your flight—still more as the author of a plan to throw you into the hands of De la Marck—will at this moment produce perhaps the King's death or dethronement; and, at all events, the most bloody war between France and Burgundy which the two countries have ever been engaged in."

"These evils shall not arrive for my sake, if they can be prevented," said the Countess Isabelle; "and indeed your slightest request were enough to make me forego my revenge, were that at any time a passion which I deeply cherish. Is it possible I would rather remember King Louis's injuries than your invaluable services?—Yet how is this to be?—When I am called before my Sovereign, the Duke of Burgundy, I must either stand silent, or speak the truth. The former would be contumacy; and to a false tale you will not desire me to train my tongue."

"Surely not," said Durward; "but let your evidence concerning Louis be confined to what you yourself positively know to be truth; and when you mention what others have reported, no matter how credibly, let it be as reports only, and beware of pledging your own personal evidence to that which, though you may fully believe, you cannot personally know to be true. The assembled Council of Burgundy cannot refuse to a monarch the

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justice which in my country is rendered to the meanest person under accusation. They must esteem him innocent until direct and sufficient proof shall demonstrate his guilt. Now, what does not consist with your own certain knowledge, should be proved by other evidence than your report from hearsay."

"I think I understand you," said the Countess Isabelle.

"I will make my meaning plainer," said Quentin; and was illustrating it accordingly by more than one instance, when the convent-bell tolled.

"That," said the Countess, "is a signal that we must part—part for ever!—But do not forget me, Durward; I will never forget you—your faithful services"——

She could not speak more, but again extended her hand, which was again pressed to his lips; and I know not how it was that, in endeavouring to withdraw her hand, the Countess came so close to the grating, that Quentin was encouraged to press the adieu on her lips. The young lady did not chide him—perhaps there was no time; for Crèvecœur and Crawford, who had been from some loop-hole eye-witnesses, if not ear-witnesses also, of what was passing, rushed into the apartment, the first in a towering passion, the latter laughing, and holding the Count back.

"To your chamber, young mistress—to your chamber!" exclaimed the Count to Isabelle who, flinging down her veil, retired in all haste—"which should be exchanged for a cell and bread and water.—And you, gentle sir, who are so malapert, the time will come when the interests of Kings and kingdoms may not be connected with such as you are; and you shall then learn the penalty of your audacity in raising your beggarly eyes"——

"Hush! hush!—enough said—rein up—rein up," said the old Lord;—"and you, Quentin, I command you to be silent, and begone to your quarters.—There is no such room for so much scorn neither, Sir Count of Crèvecœur, that I must say, now he is out of hearing—Quentin Durward is as much a gentleman as the King, only, as the Spaniard says, not so rich. He is as noble as myself, and I am chief of my name. Tush, tush! man, you must not speak to us of penalties."

"My lord, my lord," said Crèvecœur, impatiently, "the insolence of these foreign mercenaries is proverbial, and should receive rather rebuke than encouragement from you, who are their leader."

"My Lord Count," answered Crawford, "I have ordered my

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command for these fifty years, without advice either from Frenchman or Burgundian; and I intend to do so, under your favour, so long as I shall continue to hold it."

"Well, well, my lord," said Crèvecœur, "I meant you no disrespect; your nobleness, as well as your age, entitle you to be privileged in your impatience; and for these young people, I am satisfied to overlook the past, since I will take care that they never meet again."

"Do not take that upon your salvation, Crèvecœur," said the old Lord, laughing; "mountains, it is said, may meet, and why not mortal creatures that have legs, and life and love to put those legs in motion? Yon kiss, Crèvecœur, came tenderly off—methinks it was ominous."

"You are striving again to disturb my patience," said Crèvecœur, "but I will not give you that advantage over me.—Hark! they toll the summons to the Castle—an awful meeting, of which God only can foretell the issue."

"This issue I can foretell," said the old Scottish Lord, "that if violence is to be offered to the person of the King, few as his friends are, and surrounded by his enemies, he shall neither fall alone nor unavenged; and grieved I am that his own positive orders have prevented my taking measures to prepare for such an issue."

"My Lord of Crawford," said the Burgundian, "to anticipate such evil is the sure way to give occasion to it. Obey the orders of your royal master, and give no pretext for violence by taking hasty offence, and you will find that the day will pass over more smoothly than you now conjecture."

CHAPTER THIRTY-SECOND.

THE INVESTIGATION.

Me rather had, my heart might feel your love,
Than my displeased eye see your courtesy.
Up, cousin, up—your heart is up, I know,
Thus high at least—although your knee—

KING RICHARD II.

At the first toll of the bell, which was to summon the great nobles of Burgundy together in council, with the very few French

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peers who could be present on the occasion, Duke Charles, followed by a part of his train, armed with partisans and battle-axes, entered the Hall of Herbert's Tower, in the Castle of Peronne. King Louis, who had expected the visit, arose and made two steps towards the Duke, and then remained standing with an air of dignity, which, in spite of the meanness of his dress, and the familiarity of his ordinary manners, he knew very well how to assume when he judged it necessary. Upon the present important crisis, the composure of his demeanour had an evident effect upon his rival, who changed the abrupt and hasty step with which he entered the apartment into one more becoming a great vassal entering the presence of his Lord Paramount. Apparently the Duke had formed the internal resolution to treat Louis, in the outset at least, with the formalities due to his high station; but at the same time it was evident that, in doing so, he put no small constraint upon the fiery impatience of his own disposition, and was scarce able to control the feelings of resentment and the thirst of revenge which boiled in his bosom. Hence, though he compelled himself to use the outward acts, and in some degree the language, of courtesy and reverence, his colour came and went rapidly—his voice was abrupt, hoarse, and broken—his limbs shook, as if impatient of the curb imposed on his motions—he frowned and bit his lip until the blood came—and every look and movement showed that the most passionate prince who ever lived was under the dominion of one of his most violent paroxysms of fury.

The King marked this war of passion, with a calm and untroubled eye; for, though he gathered from the Duke's looks a foretaste of the bitterness of death, which he dreaded alike as a mortal and a sinful man, yet he was resolved, like a wary and skilful pilot, neither to suffer himself to be disconcerted by his own fears, nor to abandon the helm, while there was a chance of saving the vessel by adroit pilotage. Therefore, when the Duke, in a hoarse and broken tone, said something of the scarcity of his accommodations, he answered with a smile, that he could not complain, since he had as yet found Herbert's Tower a better residence than it had proved to one of his ancestors.

"They told you the tradition then?" said Charles—"Yes—here he was slain—but it was because he refused to take the cowl, and finish his days in a monastery."

"The more fool he," said Louis, affecting unconcern, "since

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he gained the torment of being a martyr, without the merit of being a saint."

"I come," said the Duke, "to pray your Majesty to attend a high council, at which things of weight are to be deliberated upon concerning the welfare of France and Burgundy. You will presently meet them—that is if such be your pleasure"——

"Nay, my fair cousin," said the King, "never strain courtesy so far, as to entreat what you may so boldly command—To council, since such is your Grace's pleasure. We are somewhat shorn of our train," he added, looking upon the small suite that arranged themselves to attend him—"but you, cousin, must shine out for us both."

Marshalled by Toison d'Or, chief of the heralds of Burgundy, the Princes left the Earl Herbert's Tower, and entered the castle-yard, which Louis observed was filled with the Duke's body-guard and men-at-arms, splendidly accoutred, and drawn up in martial array. Crossing the court, they entered the Council Hall, which was in a much more modern part of the building than that of which Louis had been the tenant, and, though in disrepair, had been hastily arranged for the solemnity of a public council. Two chairs of state were erected under the same canopy, that for the King being raised two steps higher than the one which the Duke was to occupy; about twenty of the chief nobility sat, arranged in due order, on either hand of the chair of state; and thus, when both the Princes were seated, the person for whose trial, as it might be called, the council was summoned, held the highest place, and appeared to preside in it.

It was perhaps to get rid of this inconsistency, and the scruples which might have been inspired by it, that Duke Charles, having bowed slightly to the royal chair, bluntly opened the sitting with the following words:—

"My good vassals and councillors, it is not unknown to you what disturbances have arisen in our territories, both in our father's time, and in our own, from the rebellion of vassals against superiors, and subjects against their princes. And lately we have had the most dreadful proof of the height to which these evils have arrived in our case, by the scandalous flight of the Countess Isabelle of Croye, and her aunt the Lady Hameline, to take refuge with a foreign power, thereby renouncing their fealty to us, and inferring the forfeiture of their fiefs; and in another more dreadful and deplorable instance, by the sacrilegious

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and bloody murder of our beloved brother and ally the Bishop of Liege, and the rebellion of that treacherous city, which was but too mildly punished for the last insurrection. We have been informed that these sad events may be traced, not merely to the inconstancy and folly of women, and the presumption of pampered citizens, but to the agency of foreign power, and the interference of a mighty neighbour, from whom, if good deeds could merit any return in kind, Burgundy could have expected nothing but the most sincere and devoted friendship. If this should prove truth," said the Duke, setting his teeth, and pressing his heel against the ground, "what consideration shall withhold us—the means being in our power—from taking such measures, as shall effectually, and at the very source, close up the main spring, from which these evils have yearly flowed on us?"

The Duke had begun his speech with some calmness, but he elevated his voice at the conclusion; and the last sentence was spoken in a tone which made all the councillors tremble, and brought a transient fit of paleness across the King's cheek. He instantly recalled his courage, however, and addressed the council in his turn, in a tone evincing so much ease and composure, that the Duke, though he seemed desirous to interrupt or stop him, found no decent opportunity to do so.

"Nobles of France and of Burgundy," he said, "Knights of the Holy Spirit and of the Golden Fleece! since a King must plead his cause as an accused person, he cannot desire more distinguished judges, than the flower of nobleness, and muster and pride of chivalry. Our fair cousin of Burgundy hath but darkened the dispute between us, in so far as his courtesy has declined to state it in precise terms. I, who have no cause for observing such delicacy, nay, whose condition permits me not to do so, crave leave to speak more precisely. It is to Us, my lords—to Us, his liege Lord, his kinsman, his ally, that unhappy circumstances, perverting our cousin's clear judgment and better nature, have induced him to apply the hateful charges of seducing his vassals from their allegiance, stirring up the people of Liege to revolt, and stimulating the outlawed William de la Marck to commit a most cruel and sacrilegious murder. Nobles of France and Burgundy, I might truly appeal to the circumstances in which I now stand, as being in themselves a complete contradiction of such an accusation; for is it to be supposed, that, having the sense of a rational being left me, I should have thrown

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myself unreservedly into the power of the Duke of Burgundy, while I was practising treachery against him, such as could not fail to be discovered, and which, being discovered, must place me, as I now stand, in the power of a justly exasperated prince? The folly of one who should seat himself quietly down to repose on a mine, after he had lighted the match which was to cause instant explosion, would have been wisdom compared to mine. I have no doubt, that, amongst the perpetrators of those horrible treasons at Schonwaldt, villains have been busy with my name —but am I to be answerable, who have given them no right to use it?—If two silly women, disgusted on account of some romantic cause of displeasure, sought refuge at my Court, does it follow that they did so by my direction?—It will be found, when inquired into, that, since honour and chivalry forbade my sending them back prisoners to the Court of Burgundy—which, I think, gentlemen, no one who wears the collar of these Orders would suggest—that I came as nearly as possible to the same point, by placing them in the hands of the venerable father in God, who is now a saint in heaven."—Here Louis seemed much affected, and pressed his kerchief to his eyes—"In the hands, I say, of a member of my own family, and still more closely united with that of Burgundy, whose situation, exalted condition in the church, and, alas! whose numerous virtues, qualified him to be the protector of these unhappy wanderers for a little while, and the mediator betwixt them and their liege Lord. I say, therefore, the only circumstances which seem, in my brother of Burgundy's hasty view of this subject, to argue unworthy suspicions against me, are such as can be explained on the fairest and most honourable motives; and I say, moreover, that no one particle of credible evidence can be brought to support the injurious charges which have induced my brother to alter his friendly looks towards one who came to him in full confidence of friendship—have caused him to turn his festive hall into a court of justice, and his hospitable apartments into a prison."

"My lord, my lord," said Charles, breaking in as soon as the King paused, "for your being here at a time so unluckily coinciding with the execution of your projects, I can only account by supposing, that those who make it their trade to impose on others, do sometimes egregiously delude themselves. The engineer is sometimes killed by the springing of his own petard.—For what

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is to follow, let it depend on the event of this solemn inquiry. —Bring hither the Countess Isabelle of Croye."

As the young lady was introduced, supported on the one side by the Countess of Crèvecœur, who had her husband's commands to that effect, and on the other by the Abbess of the Ursuline convent, Charles exclaimed, with his usual harshness of voice and manner,—"Soh! sweet Princess—you, who could scarce find breath to answer us when we last laid our just and reasonable commands on you, yet have had wind enough to run as long a course as ever did hunted doe—what think you of the fair work you have made between two great Princes, and two mighty countries, that have been like to go to war for your baby face?"

The publicity of the scene, and the violence of Charles's manner, totally overcame the resolution which Isabelle had formed of throwing herself at the Duke's feet, and imploring him to take possession of her estates, and permit her to retire into a cloister. She stood motionless, like a terrified female in a storm, who hears the thunder roll on every side of her, and apprehends in every fresh peal, the bolt which is to strike her dead. The Countess of Crèvecœur, a woman of spirit equal to her birth and to the beauty which she preserved even in her matronly years, judged it necessary to interfere. "My Lord Duke," she said, "my fair cousin is under my protection. I know better than your Grace how women should be treated, and we will leave this presence instantly, unless you use a tone and language more suitable to our rank and sex."

The Duke burst out into a laugh. "Crèvecœur," he said, "thy tameness hath made a lordly dame of thy Countess; but that is no affair of mine. Give a seat to yonder simple girl, to whom, so far from feeling enmity, I design the highest grace and honour.—Sit down, mistress, and tell us at your leisure what fiend possessed you to fly from your native country, and embrace the trade of a damsel adventurous."

With much pain, and not without several interruptions, Isabelle confessed, that, being absolutely determined against a match proposed to her by the Duke of Burgundy, she had indulged the hope of obtaining protection of the Court of France.

"And under protection of the French Monarch," said Charles —"Of that, doubtless, you were well assured?"

"I did indeed so think myself assured," said the Countess

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Isabelle, "otherwise I had not taken a step so decided."—Here Charles looked upon Louis with a smile of inexpressible bitterness, which the King supported with the utmost firmness, except that his lip grew something whiter than it was wont to be.—"But my information concerning King Louis's intentions towards us," continued the Countess, after a short pause, "was almost entirely derived from my unhappy aunt, the Lady Hameline, and her opinions were formed upon the assertions and insinuations of persons whom I have since discovered to be the vilest traitors and most faithless wretches in the world." She then stated, in brief terms, what she had since come to learn of the treachery of Marthon, and of Hayraddin Maugrabin, and added, that she "entertained no doubt that the elder Maugrabin, called Zamet, the original adviser of their flight, was capable of every species of treachery, as well as of assuming the character of an agent of Louis without authority."

There was a pause while the Countess continued her story, which she prosecuted, though very briefly, from the time she left the territories of Burgundy, in company with her aunt, until the storming of Schonwaldt, and her final surrender to the Count of Crèvecœur. All remained mute after she had finished her brief and broken narrative, and the Duke of Burgundy bent his fierce dark eyes on the ground, like one who seeks for a pretext to indulge his passion, but finds none sufficiently plausible to justify himself in his own eyes. "The mole," he said, at length, looking upwards, "winds not his dark subterraneous path beneath our feet the less certainly, that we, though conscious of his motions, cannot absolutely trace them. Yet I would know of King Louis, wherefore he maintained these ladies at his Court, had they not gone thither by his own invitation."

"I did not so entertain them, fair cousin," answered the King. "Out of compassion, indeed, I received them in privacy, but took an early opportunity of placing them under the protection of the late excellent Bishop, your own ally, and who was (may God assoil him!) a better judge than I, or any secular prince, how to reconcile the protection due to the fugitives, with the duty which a King owes to his ally, from whose dominions they have fled. I boldly ask this young lady, whether my reception of them was cordial, or whether it was not, on the contrary, such as made them express regret that they had made my Court their place of refuge?"

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"So much was it otherwise than cordial," answered the Countess, "that it induced me, at least, to doubt how far it was possible that your Majesty should have actually given the invitation of which we had been assured, by those who called themselves your agents; since, supposing them to have proceeded only as they were duly authorised, it would have been hard to reconcile your Majesty's conduct with that to be expected from a king, a knight, and a gentleman."

The Countess turned her eyes to the King as she spoke, with a look which was probably intended as a reproach, but the breast of Louis was armed against all such artillery. On the contrary, waving slowly his expanded hands, and looking around the circle, he seemed to make a triumphant appeal to all present, upon the testimony borne to his innocence in the Countess's reply.

Burgundy, meanwhile, cast on him a look which seemed to say, that if in some degree silenced, he was as far as ever from being satisfied, and then said abruptly to the Countess,—"Methinks, fair mistress, in this account of your wanderings you have forgot all mention of certain love-passages—So, ho! blushing already?—Certain knights of the forest, by whom your quiet was for a time interrupted. Well—that incident hath come to our ear, and something we may presently form out of it.—Tell me, King Louis, were it not well, before this vagrant Helen of Troy, or of Croye, set more kings by the ears, were it not well to carve out a fitting match for her?"

King Louis, though conscious what ungrateful proposal was likely to be made next, gave a calm and silent assent to what Charles said; but the Countess herself was restored to courage by the very extremity of her situation. She quitted the arm of the Countess of Crèvecœur, on which she had hitherto leaned, came forward timidly, yet with an air of dignity, and kneeling before the Duke's throne, thus addressed him:—"Noble Duke of Burgundy, and my liege Lord; I acknowledge my fault in having withdrawn myself from your dominions without your gracious permission, and will most humbly acquiesce in any penalty you are pleased to impose. I place my lands and castles at your rightful disposal, and pray you only of your own bounty, and for the sake of my father's memory, to allow the last of the line of Croye, out of her large estate, such a moderate maintenance as may find her admission into a convent for the remainder of her life."

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"What think you, Sire, of the young person's petition to us?" said the Duke, addressing Louis.

"As of a holy and humble motion," said the King, "which doubtless comes from that grace which ought not to be resisted or withstood."

"The humble and lowly shall be exalted," said Charles. "Arise, Countess Isabelle—we mean better for you than you have devised for yourself. We mean neither to sequestrate your estates, nor to abase your honours, but, on the contrary, will add largely to both."

"Alas! my lord," said the Countess, continuing on her knees, "it is even that well-meant goodness which I fear still more than your Grace's displeasure, since it compels me"——

"Saint George of Burgundy!" said Duke Charles, "is our will to be thwarted, and our commands disputed, at every turn? Up, I say, minion, and withdraw for the present—when we have time to think of thee, we will so order matters, that, *Tête-Saint-Gris!* you shall either obey us or do worse."

Notwithstanding this stern answer, the Countess Isabelle remained at his feet, and would probably, by her pertinacity, have driven him to say upon the spot something yet more severe, had not the Countess of Crèvecœur, who better knew that Prince's humour, interfered to raise her young friend, and to conduct her from the hall.

Quentin Durward was now summoned to appear, and presented himself before the King and Duke with that freedom, distant alike from bashful reserve and intrusive boldness, which becomes a youth at once well-born and well-nurtured, who gives honour where it is due, but without permitting himself to be dazzled or confused by the presence of those to whom it is to be rendered. His uncle had furnished him with the means of again equipping himself in the arms and dress of an Archer of the Scottish Guard, and his complexion, mien, and air, suited in an uncommon degree his splendid appearance. His extreme youth, too, prepossessed the councillors in his favour, the rather that no one could easily believe that the sagacious Louis would have chosen so very young a person to become the confidant of political intrigues; and thus the King enjoyed, in this, as in other cases, considerable advantage from his singular choice of agents, both as to age and rank, where such election seemed least likely to be made. At the command of the Duke, sanctioned

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by that of Louis, Quentin commenced an account of his journey with the Ladies of Croye to the neighbourhood of Liege, premising a statement of King Louis's instructions, which were, that he should escort them safely to the castle of the Bishop.

"And you obeyed my orders accordingly," said the King.

"I did, Sire," replied the Scot.

"You omit a circumstance," said the Duke. "You were set upon in the forest by two wandering knights."

"It does not become me to remember or to proclaim such an incident," said the youth, blushing ingenuously.

"But it doth not become *me* to forget it," said the Duke of Orleans. "This youth discharged his commission manfully, and maintained his trust in a manner that I shall long remember.—Come to my apartment, Archer, when this matter is over, and thou shalt find I have not forgot thy brave bearing, while I am glad to see it is equalled by thy modesty."

"And come to mine," said Dunois. "I have a helmet for thee, since I think I owe thee one." Quentin bowed low to both, and the examination was resumed. At the command of Duke Charles he produced the written instructions which he had received for the direction of his journey.

"Did you follow these instructions literally, soldier?" said the Duke.

"No, if it please your Grace," replied Quentin. "They directed me, as you may be pleased to observe, to cross the Maes near Namur; whereas I kept the left bank, as being both the nigher and the safer road to Liege."

"And wherefore that alteration?" said the Duke.

"Because I began to suspect the fidelity of my guide," answered Quentin.

"Now, mark the questions I have next to ask thee," said the Duke. "Reply truly to them, and fear nothing from the resentment of any one. But if you palter or double in your answers, I will have thee hung alive in an iron chain from the steeple of the market-house, where thou shalt wish for death for many an hour ere he come to relieve you!"

There was a deep silence ensued. At length, having given the youth time, as he thought, to consider the circumstances in which he was placed, the Duke demanded to know of Durward who his guide was, by whom supplied, and wherefore he had been led to entertain suspicion of him? To the first

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of these questions, Quentin Durward answered, by naming Hayraddin Maugrabin, the Bohemian; to the second, that the guide had been recommended by Tristan l'Hermite; and in reply to the third point, he mentioned what had happened in the Franciscan convent near Namur; how the Bohemian had been expelled from the holy house; and how, jealous of his behaviour, he had dogged him to a rendezvous with one of William de la Marck's lanzknechts, where he overheard them arrange a plan for surprising the ladies who were under his protection.

"Now, hark ye," said the Duke, "and once more remember thy life depends on thy veracity, did these villains mention their having this King's—I mean this very King Louis of France's authority, for their scheme of surprising the escort, and carrying away the ladies?"

"If such infamous fellows had said so," replied Quentin, "I know not how I should have believed them, having the word of the King himself to place in opposition to theirs."

Louis, who had listened hitherto with most earnest attention, could not help drawing his breath deeply, when he heard Durward's answer, in the manner of one from whose bosom a heavy weight has been at once removed. The Duke again looked disconcerted and moody; and, returning to the charge, questioned Quentin still more closely, whether he did not understand, from these men's private conversation, that the plots which they meditated had King Louis's sanction?

"I repeat, that I heard nothing which could authorise me to say so," answered the young man, who, though internally convinced of the King's accession to the treachery of Hayraddin, yet held it contrary to his allegiance to bring forward his own suspicions on the subject; "and if I *had* heard such men make such an assertion, I again say that I would not have given their testimony weight against the instructions of the King himself."

"Thou art a faithful messenger," said the Duke, with a sneer; "and I venture to say, that in obeying the King's instructions, thou hast disappointed his expectations in a manner that thou mightest have smarted for, but that subsequent events have made thy bull-headed fidelity seem like good service."

"I understand you not, my lord," said Quentin Durward;

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"all I know is, that my master King Louis sent me to protect these ladies, and that I did so accordingly, to the extent of my ability, both in the journey to Schonwaldt, and through the subsequent scenes which took place. I understood the instructions of the King to be honourable, and I executed them honourably; had they been of a different tenor, they would not have suited one of my name or nation."

"*Fier comme un Ecossois,*" said Charles, who, however disappointed at the tenor of Durward's reply, was not unjust enough to blame him for his boldness. "But hark thee, Archer, what instructions were those which made thee, as some sad fugitives from Schonwaldt have informed us, parade the streets of Liege, at the head of those mutineers, who afterwards cruelly murdered their temporal Prince and spiritual Father? And what harangue was it which thou didst make after that murder was committed, in which you took upon you, as agent for Louis, to assume authority among the villains who had just perpetrated so great a crime?"

"My lord," said Quentin, "there are many who could testify, that I assumed not the character of an envoy of France in the town of Liege, but had it fixed upon me by the obstinate clamours of the people themselves, who refused to give credit to any disclamation which I could make. This I told to those in the service of the Bishop when I had made my escape from the city, and recommended their attention to the security of the Castle, which might have prevented the calamity and horror of the succeeding night. It is, no doubt, true, that I did, in the extremity of danger, avail myself of the influence which my imputed character gave me, to save the Countess Isabelle, to protect my own life, and, so far as I could, to rein in the humour for slaughter, which had already broke out in so dreadful an instance. I repeat, and will maintain it with my body, that I had no commission of any kind from the King of France, respecting the people of Liege, far less instructions to instigate them to mutiny; and that, finally, when I did avail myself of that imputed character, it was as if I had snatched up a shield to protect myself in a moment of emergency, and used it, as I should surely have done, for the defence of myself and others, without inquiring whether I had a right to the heraldic emblazonments which it displayed."

"And therein, my young companion and prisoner," said

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Crèvecœur, unable any longer to remain silent, "acted with equal spirit and good sense; and his doing so cannot justly be imputed as blame to King Louis."

There was a murmur of assent among the surrounding nobility, which sounded joyfully in the ears of King Louis, whilst it gave no little offence to Charles. He rolled his eyes angrily around, and the sentiments, so generally expressed by so many of his highest vassals and wisest councillors, would not perhaps have prevented his giving way to his violent and despotic temper, had not Des Comines, who foresaw the danger, prevented it, by suddenly announcing a herald from the city of Liege.

"A herald from weavers and nailers!" exclaimed the Duke —"but, admit him instantly. By Our Lady, I will learn from this same herald something farther of his employers' hopes and projects, than this young French-Scottish man-at-arms seems desirous to tell me."

CHAPTER THIRTY-THIRD.

THE HERALD.

Ariel. —— Hark! they roar.
Prospero. Let them be hunted soundly.
THE TEMPEST.

THERE was room made in the assembly, and no small curiosity evinced by those present to see the herald whom the insurgent Liegeois had ventured to send to so haughty a Prince as the Duke of Burgundy, while in such high indignation against them. For it must be remembered, that at this period heralds were only despatched from sovereign princes to each other upon solemn occasions; and that the inferior nobility employed pursuivants, a lower rank of officers-at-arms. It may be also noticed in passing, that Louis XI., a habitual derider of whatever did not promise real power or substantial advantage, was in especial a professed contemner of heralds and heraldry, "red, blue, and green, with all their trumpery,"* to which the pride

* For a remarkable instance of this, see Note T.

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of his rival Charles, which was of a very different kind, attached no small degree of ceremonious importance.

The herald, who was now introduced into the presence of the monarchs, was dressed in a tabard, or coat, embroidered with the arms of his master, in which the boar's head made a distinguished appearance, in blazonry, which, in the opinion of the skilful, was more showy than accurate. The rest of his dress—a dress always sufficiently tawdry—was overcharged with lace, embroidery, and ornament of every kind; and the plume of feathers which he wore was so high, as if intended to sweep the roof of the hall. In short, the usual gaudy splendour of the heraldic attire was caricatured and overdone. The Boar's-head was not only repeated on every part of his dress, but even his bonnet was formed into that shape, and it was represented with gory tongue and bloody tusks, or in proper language, *langed and dentated gules;* and there was something in the man's appearance which seemed to imply a mixture of boldness and apprehension, like one who has undertaken a dangerous commission, and is sensible that audacity alone can carry him through it with safety. Something of the same mixture of fear and effrontery was visible in the manner in which he paid his respects, and he showed also a grotesque awkwardness, not usual amongst those who were accustomed to be received in the presence of princes.

"Who art thou, in the devil's name?" was the greeting with which Charles the Bold received this singular envoy.

"I am Rouge Sanglier," answered the herald, "the officer-at-arms of William de la Marck, by the grace of God, and the election of the Chapter, Prince Bishop of Liege."

"Ha!" exclaimed Charles; but as if subduing his own passion he made a sign to him to proceed.

"And in right of his wife, the honourable Countess Hameline of Croye, Count of Croye, and Lord of Bracquemont."

The utter astonishment of Duke Charles at the extremity of boldness with which these titles were announced in his presence, seemed to strike him dumb; and the herald, conceiving, doubtless, that he had made a suitable impression by the annunciation of his character, proceeded to state his errand.

"*Annuncio vobis gaudium magnum,*" he said; "I let you, Charles of Burgundy and Earl of Flanders, to know, in my master's name, that under favour of a dispensation of our Holy

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Father of Rome, presently expected, and appointing a fitting substitute *ad sacra*, he proposes to exercise at once the office of Prince Bishop, and maintain the rights of Count of Croye."

The Duke of Burgundy, at this and other pauses in the herald's speech, only ejaculated "Ha!" or some similar interjection, without making any answer; and the tone of exclamation was that of one who, though surprised and moved, is willing to hear all that is to be said ere he commits himself by making an answer. To the farther astonishment of all who were present, he forbore from his usual abrupt and violent gesticulations, remaining with the nail of his thumb pressed against his teeth, which was his favourite attitude when giving attention, and keeping his eyes bent on the ground, as if unwilling to betray the passion which might gleam in them.

The envoy, therefore, proceeded boldly and unabashed in the delivery of his message. "In the name, therefore, of the Prince Bishop of Liege, and Count of Croye, I am to require of you, Duke Charles, to desist from those pretensions and encroachments which you have made on the free and imperial city of Liege, by connivance with the late Louis of Bourbon, unworthy Bishop thereof."—

"Ha!" again exclaimed the Duke.

"Also to restore the banners of the community, which you took violently from the town, to the number of six-and-thirty, —to rebuild the breaches in their walls, and restore the fortifications which you tyrannically dismantled,—and to acknowledge my master, William de la Marck, as Prince Bishop, lawfully elected in a free Chapter of Canons, of which behold the procès verbal."

"Have you finished?" said the Duke.

"Not yet," replied the envoy: "I am farther to require your Grace, on the part of the said right noble and venerable Prince, Bishop, and Count, that you do presently withdraw the garrison from the Castle of Bracquemont, and other places of strength, belonging to the Earldom of Croye, which have been placed there, whether in your own most gracious name, or in that of Isabelle, calling herself Countess of Croye, or any other, until it shall be decided by the Imperial Diet, whether the fiefs in question shall not pertain to the sister of the late Count, my most gracious Lady Hameline, rather than to his daughter, in respect of the *jus emphyteusis*."

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"Your master is most learned," replied the Duke.

"Yet," continued the herald, "the noble and venerable Prince and Count will be disposed, all other disputes betwixt Burgundy and Liege being settled, to fix upon the Lady Isabelle such an appanage as may become her quality."

"He is generous and considerate," said the Duke in the same tone.

"Now, by a poor fool's conscience," said Le Glorieux apart to the Count of Crèvecœur, "I would rather be in the worst cow's hide that ever died of the murrain, than in that fellow's painted coat! The poor man goes on like drunkards, who only look to the other pot, and not to the score which mine host chalks up behind the lattice."

"Have you yet done?" said the Duke to the herald.

"One word more," answered Rouge Sanglier, "from my noble and venerable lord aforesaid, respecting his worthy and trusty ally, the Most Christian King"——

"Ha!" exclaimed the Duke, starting, and in a fiercer tone than he had yet used; but, checking himself, he instantly composed himself again to attention.

"Which most Christian King's royal person it is rumoured that you, Charles of Burgundy, have placed under restraint, contrary to your duty as a vassal of the Crown of France, and to the faith observed among Christian Sovereigns. For which reason, my said noble and venerable master, by my mouth, charges you to put his Royal and Most Christian ally forthwith at freedom, or to receive the defiance which I am authorised to pronounce to you."

"Have you yet done?" said the Duke.

"I have," answered the herald, "and await your Grace's answer, trusting it may be such as will save the effusion of Christian blood."

"Now, by Saint George of Burgundy"—said the Duke—but ere he could proceed further, Louis arose, and struck in with a tone of so much dignity and authority, that Charles could not interrupt him.

"Under your favour, fair cousin of Burgundy," said the King, "we ourselves crave priority of voice in replying to this insolent fellow.—Sirrah herald, or whatever thou art, carry back notice to the perjured outlaw and murderer, William de la Marck that the King of France will be presently before

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Liege, for the purpose of punishing the sacrilegious murderer of his late beloved kinsman, Louis of Bourbon; and that he proposes to gibbet De la Marck alive, for the insolence of terming himself his ally, and putting his royal name into the mouth of one of his own base messengers."

"And whatever else on my part," said Charles, "which it may not misbecome a prince to send to a common thief and murderer.—And begone!—Yet stay.—Never herald went from the Court of Burgundy without having cause to cry, Largesse! —Let him be scourged till the bones are laid bare!"

"Nay, but if please your Grace," said Crèvecœur and D'Hymbercourt together, "he is a herald, and so far privileged."

"It is you, Messires," replied the Duke, "who are such owls as to think that the tabard makes the herald. I see by that fellow's blazoning he is a mere impostor. Let Toison d'Or step forward, and question him in your presence."

In spite of his natural effrontery, the envoy of the Wild Boar of Ardennes now became pale; and that notwithstanding some touches of paint with which he had adorned his countenance. Toison d'Or, the chief herald, as we have elsewhere said, of the Duke, and King-at-arms within his dominions, stepped forward with the solemnity of one who knew what was due to his office, and asked his supposed brother, in what College he had studied the science which he professed.

"I was bred a pursuivant at the Heraldic College of Ratisbon," answered Rouge Sanglier, "and received diploma of Ehrenhold from that same learned fraternity."

"You could not derive it from a source more worthy," answered Toison d'Or, bowing still lower than he had done before; "and if I presume to confer with you on the mysteries of our sublime science, in obedience to the orders of the most gracious Duke, it is not in hopes of giving, but of receiving knowledge."

"Go to," said the Duke, impatiently. "Leave off ceremony, and ask him some question that may try his skill."

"It were injustice to ask a disciple of the worthy College of Arms at Ratisbon, if he comprehendeth the common terms of blazonry," said Toison d'Or; "but I may, without offence, crave of Rouge Sanglier to say if he is instructed in the more mysterious and secret terms of the science, by which the more

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learned do emblematically, and as it were parabolically, express to each other what is conveyed to others in the ordinary language, taught in the very accidence as it were of Heraldry?"

"I understand one sort of blazonry as well as another," answered Rouge Sanglier, boldly; "but it may be we have not the same terms in Germany which you have here in Flanders."

"Alas, that you will say so!" replied Toison d'Or; "our noble science, which is indeed the very banner of nobleness, and glory of generosity, being the same in all Christian countries, nay, known and acknowledged even by the Saracens and Moors. I would, therefore, pray of you to describe what coat you will after the celestial fashion, that is, by the planets."

"Blazon it yourself as you will," said Rouge Sanglier; "I will do no such apish tricks upon commandment, as an ape is made to come aloft."

"Show him a coat, and let him blazon it his own way," said the Duke; "and if he fails, I promise him that his back shall be gules, azure, and sable."

"Here," said the herald of Burgundy, taking from his pouch a piece of parchment, "is a scroll, in which certain considerations led me to prick down, after my own poor fashion, an ancient coat. I will pray my brother, if indeed he belong to the honourable College of Arms at Ratisbon, to decipher it in fitting language."

Le Glorieux, who seemed to take great pleasure in this discussion, had by this time bustled himself close up to the two heralds. "I will help thee, good fellow," said he to Rouge Sanglier, as he looked hopelessly upon the scroll. "This, my lords and masters, represents the cat looking out at the dairy-window."

This sally occasioned a laugh, which was something to the advantage of Rouge Sanglier, as it led Toison d'Or, indignant at the misconstruction of his drawing, to explain it as the coat-of-arms assumed by Childebert, King of France, after he had taken prisoner Gandemar, King of Burgundy; representing an ounce, or tiger-cat, the emblem of the captive prince, behind a grating, or, as Toison d'Or technically defined it, "Sable, a musion passant Or, oppressed with a trellis gules, cloué of the second."

"By my bauble," said Le Glorieux, "if the cat resemble

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Burgundy, she has the right side of the grating now-a-days."

"True, good fellow," said Louis, laughing, while the rest of the presence, and even Charles himself, seemed disconcerted at so broad a jest,—"I owe thee a piece of gold for turning something that looked like sad earnest into the merry game which I trust it will end in."

"Silence, Le Glorieux," said the Duke; "and you, Toison d'Or, who are too learned to be intelligible, stand back,—and bring that rascal forward, some of you.—Hark ye, villain," he said in his harshest tone, "do you know the difference between argent and or, except in the shape of coined money?"

"For pity's sake, your Grace, be good unto me!—Noble King Louis, speak for me!"

"Speak for thyself," said the Duke—"In a word, art thou herald or not?"

"Only for this occasion!" acknowledged the detected official.

"Now, by Saint George!" said the Duke, eyeing Louis askance, "we know no king—no gentleman—save *one*, who would have so prostituted the noble science on which royalty and gentry rest! save that King, who sent to Edward of England a serving man disguised as a herald."*

"Such a stratagem," said Louis, laughing, or affecting to laugh, "could only be justified at a Court where no heralds were at the time, and when the emergency was urgent. But, though it might have passed on the blunt and thick-witted islander, no one with brains a whit better than those of a wild boar would have thought of passing such a trick upon the accomplished Court of Burgundy."

"Send him who will," said the Duke, fiercely, "he shall return on their hands in poor case.—Here!—drag him to the market-place!—slash him with bridle-reins and dog-whips until the tabard hang about him in tatters!—Upon the Rouge Sanglier!—ça ça!—Haloo, haloo!"

Four or five large hounds, such as are painted in the hunting-pieces upon which Rubens and Schneiders laboured in conjunction, caught the well-known notes with which the Duke concluded, and began to yell and bay as if the boar were just roused from his lair.

"By the rood!" said King Louis, observant to catch the vein

* Note T. The disguised herald.

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of his dangerous cousin, "since the ass has put on the boar's hide, I would set the dogs on him to bait him out of it!"

"Right! right!" exclaimed Duke Charles, the fancy exactly chiming in with his humour at the moment—"it shall be done!—Uncouple the hounds!—Hyke a Talbot! hyke a Beaumont!—We will course him from the door of the Castle to the east gate."

"I trust your Grace will treat me as a beast of chase," said the fellow, putting the best face he could upon the matter, "and allow me fair law?"

"Thou art but vermin," said the Duke, "and entitled to no law, by the letter of the book of hunting; nevertheless, thou shalt have sixty yards in advance, were it but for the sake of thy unparalleled impudence.—Away, away, sirs!—we will see this sport."—And the council breaking up tumultuously, all hurried, none faster than the two Princes, to enjoy the humane pastime which King Louis had suggested.

The Rouge Sanglier showed excellent sport; for, winged with terror, and having half-a-score of fierce boar-hounds hard at his haunches, encouraged by the blowing of horns and the woodland cheer of the hunters, he flew like the very wind, and had he not been encumbered with his herald's coat (the worst possible habit for a runner), he might fairly have escaped dog-free; he also doubled once or twice, in a manner much approved of by the spectators. None of these, nay, not even Charles himself, was so delighted with the sport as King Louis, who, partly from political considerations, and partly as being naturally pleased with the sight of human suffering when ludicrously exhibited, laughed till the tears ran from his eyes, and in his ecstasies of rapture, caught hold of the Duke's ermine cloak, as if to support himself; whilst the Duke, no less delighted, flung his arm around the King's shoulder, making thus an exhibition of confidential sympathy and familiarity, very much at variance with the terms on which they had so lately stood together.

At length the speed of the pseudo-herald could save him no longer from the fangs of his pursuers; they seized him, pulled him down, and would probably soon have throttled him, had not the Duke called out—"Stave and tail!—stave and tail!—Take them off him!—He hath shown so good a course, that,

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At length the speed of the pseudo-herald could save him no longer from the fangs of his pursuers.—PAGE 428.

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though he has made no sport at bay, we will not have him despatched.

Several officers accordingly busied themselves in taking off the dogs; and they were soon seen coupling some up, and pursuing others which ran through the streets, shaking in sport and triumph the tattered fragments of painted cloth and embroidery rent from the tabard, which the unfortunate wearer had put on in an unlucky hour.

At this moment, and while the Duke was too much engaged with what passed before him to mind what was said behind him, Oliver le Dain, gliding behind King Louis, whispered into his ear—"It is the Bohemian, Hayraddin Maugrabin—It were not well he should come to speech of the Duke."

"He must die," answered Louis, in the same tone—"dead men tell no tales."

One instant afterwards Tristan l'Hermite, to whom Oliver had given the hint, stepped forward before the King and the Duke, and said, in his blunt manner, "So please your Majesty and your Grace, this piece of game is mine, and I claim him—he is marked with my stamp—the fleur-de-lys is branded on his shoulder, as all men may see.—He is a known villain, and hath slain the King's subjects, robbed churches, deflowered virgins, slain deer in the royal parks"——

"Enough, enough," said Duke Charles, "he is my royal cousin's property by many a good title. What will your Majesty do with him?"

"If he is left to my disposal," said the King, "I will at least give him one lesson in the science of heraldry, in which he is so ignorant—only explain to him practically, the meaning of a cross *potence*, with a noose dangling proper."

"Not as to be by him borne, but as to bear him.—Let him take the degrees under your gossip Tristan—he is a deep professor in such mysteries."

Thus answered the Duke, with a burst of discordant laughter at his own wit, which was so cordially chorussed by Louis, that his rival could not help looking kindly at him, while he said—

"Ah, Louis, Louis! would to God thou wert as faithful a monarch as thou art a merry companion!—I cannot but think often on the jovial time we used to spend together."

"You may bring it back when you will," said Louis; "I will grant you as fair terms as for very shame's sake you ought

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to ask in my present condition, without making yourself the fable of Christendom; and I will swear to observe them upon the holy relique which I have ever the grace to bear about my person, being a fragment of the true cross."

Here he took a small golden reliquary, which was suspended from his neck next to his shirt by a chain of the same metal, and having kissed it devoutly, continued—

"Never was false oath sworn on this most sacred relique, but it was avenged within the year."

"Yet," said the Duke, "it was the same on which you swore amity to me when you left Burgundy, and shortly after sent the Bastard of Rubempré to murder or kidnap me."

"Nay, gracious cousin, now you are ripping up ancient grievances," said the King; "I promise you, that you were deceived in that matter.—Moreover, it was not upon *this* relique which I then swore, but upon another fragment of the true cross which I got from the Grand Seignior, weakened in virtue, doubtless, by sojourning with infidels. Besides, did not the war of the Public Good break out within the year; and was not a Burgundian army encamped at Saint Denis, backed by all the great feudatories of France; and was I not obliged to yield up Normandy to my brother?—O God, shield us from perjury on such a warrant as this!"

"Well, cousin," answered the Duke, "I do believe thou hadst a lesson to keep faith another time.—And now for once, without finesse and doubling, will you make good your promise, and go with me to punish this murdering La Marck and the Liegeois?"

"I will march against them," said Louis, "with the Ban, and Arrière-Ban of France, and the Oriflamme displayed."

"Nay, nay," said the Duke, "that is more than is needful, or may be advisable. The presence of your Scottish Guard, and two hundred choice lances, will serve to show that you are a free agent. A large army might"——

"Make me so in effect, you would say, my fair cousin?" said the King. "Well, you shall dictate the number of my attendants."

"And to put this fair cause of mischief out of the way, you will agree to the Countess Isabelle of Croye wedding with the Duke of Orleans?"

"Fair cousin," said the King, "you drive my courtesy to

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extremity. The Duke is the betrothed bridegroom of my daughter Joan. Be generous—yield up this matter, and let us speak rather of the towns on the Somme."

"My council will talk to your Majesty of these," said Charles; "I myself have less at heart the acquisition of territory, than the redress of injuries. You have tampered with my vassals, and your royal pleasure must needs dispose of the hand of a Ward of Burgundy. Your Majesty must bestow it within the pale of your own royal family, since you have meddled with it—otherwise our conference breaks off."

"Were I to say I did this willingly," said the King, "no one would believe me; therefore do you, my fair cousin, judge of the extent of my wish to oblige you, when I say most reluctantly, that the parties consenting, and a dispensation from the Pope being obtained, my own objections shall be no bar to this match which you propose."

"All besides can be easily settled by our ministers," said the Duke, "and we are once more cousins and friends."

"May Heaven be praised!" said Louis, "who, holding in his hand the hearts of princes, doth mercifully incline them to peace and clemency, and prevent the effusion of human blood. —Oliver," he added apart to that favourite, who ever waited around him like the familiar beside a sorcerer, "Hark thee—tell Tristan to be speedy in dealing with yonder runagate Bohemian."

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOURTH.

THE EXECUTION.

I'll take thee to the good green wood,
And make thine own hand choose the tree.
OLD BALLAD.

"Now God be praised, that gave us the power of laughing and making others laugh, and shame to the dull cur who scorns the office of a jester! Here is a joke, and that none of the brightest (though it might pass, since it has amused two Princes), which hath gone farther than a thousand reasons of state to prevent a war between France and Burgundy."

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Such was the inference of Le Glorieux, when, in consequence of the reconciliation of which we gave the particulars in the last chapter, the Burgundian guards were withdrawn from the Castle of Peronne, the abode of the King removed from the ominous Tower of Count Herbert, and, to the great joy both of French and Burgundians, an outward show at least of confidence and friendship seemed so established between Duke Charles and his liege lord. Yet still the latter, though treated with ceremonial observance, was sufficiently aware that he continued to be the object of suspicion, though he prudently affected to overlook it, and appeared to consider himself as entirely at his ease.

Meanwhile, as frequently happens in such cases, whilst the principal parties concerned had so far made up their differences, one of the subaltern agents concerned in their intrigues, was bitterly experiencing the truth of the political maxim, that if the great have frequent need of base tools, they make amends to society by abandoning them to their fate, so soon as they find them no longer useful.

This was Hayraddin Maugrabin, who, surrendered by the Duke's officers to the King's Provost-Marshal, was by him placed in the hands of his two trusty aides-de-camp, Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André, to be despatched without loss of time. One on either side of him, and followed by a few guards and a multitude of rabble,—this playing the Allegro, that the Penseroso,—he was marched off (to use a modern comparison, like Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy) to the neighbouring forest; where, to save all farther trouble and ceremonial of a gibbet, and so forth, the disposers of his fate proposed to knit him up to the first sufficient tree.

They were not long in finding an oak, as Petit-André facetiously expressed it, fit to bear such an acorn; and placing the wretched criminal on a bank, under a sufficient guard, they began their extemporaneous preparations for the final catastrophe. At that moment, Hayraddin, gazing on the crowd, encountered the eyes of Quentin Durward, who, thinking he recognised the countenance of his faithless guide in that of the detected impostor, had followed with the crowd to witness the execution, and assure himself of the identity.

When the executioners informed him that all was ready, Hayraddin, with much calmness, asked a single boon at their hands.

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"Anything, my son, consistent with our office," said Trois-Eschelles.

"That is," said Hayraddin, "anything but my life."

"Even so," said Trois-Eschelles, "and something more; for as you seem resolved to do credit to our mystery, and die like a man, without making wry mouths—why, though our orders are to be prompt, I care not if I indulge you ten minutes longer."

"You are even too generous," said Hayraddin.

"Truly we may be blamed for it," said Petit-André; "but what of that?—I could consent almost to give my life for such a jerry-come-tumble, such a smart, tight, firm lad, who proposes to come from aloft with a grace, as an honest fellow should do."

"So that if you want a confessor," said Trois-Eschelles——

"Or a *lire* of wine," said his facetious companion——

"Or a psalm," said Tragedy——

"Or a song," said Comedy——

"Neither, my good, kind, and most expeditious friends," said the Bohemian—"I only pray to speak a few minutes with yonder Archer of the Scottish Guard."

The executioners hesitated a moment; but Trois-Eschelles, recollecting that Quentin Durward was believed, from various circumstances, to stand high in the favour of their master, King Louis, they resolved to permit the interview.

When Quentin, at their summons, approached the condemned criminal, he could not but be shocked at his appearance, however justly his doom might have been deserved. The remnants of his heraldic finery, rent to tatters by the fangs of the dogs, and the clutches of the bipeds who had rescued him from their fury to lead him to the gallows, gave him at once a ludicrous and a wretched appearance. His face was discoloured with paint, and with some remnants of a fictitious beard, assumed for the purpose of disguise, and there was the paleness of death upon his cheek and upon his lip; yet, strong in passive courage, like most of his tribe, his eye, while it glistened and wandered, as well as the contorted smile of his mouth, seemed to bid defiance to the death he was about to die.

Quentin was struck, partly with horror, partly with compassion, as he approached the miserable man; and these feelings probably betrayed themselves in his manner, for Petit-André

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called out, "Trip it more smartly, jolly Archer—This gentleman's leisure cannot wait for you, if you walk as if the pebbles were eggs, and you afraid of breaking them."

"I must speak with him in privacy," said the criminal, despair seeming to croak in his accent as he uttered the words.

"That may hardly consist with our office, my merry Leap-the-ladder," said Petit-André; "we know you for a slippery eel of old."

"I am tied with your horse-girths, hand and foot," said the criminal—"You may keep guard around me, though out of ear-shot—the Archer is your own King's servant—And if I give you ten guilders"——

"Laid out in masses, the sum may profit his poor soul," said Trois-Eschelles.

"Laid out in wine or brantwein, it will comfort my poor body," responded Petit-André. "So let them be forthcoming, my little crack-rope."

"Pay the bloodhounds their fee," said Hayraddin to Durward; "I was plundered of every stiver when they took me—it shall avail thee much."

Quentin paid the executioners their guerdon, and, like men of promise, they retreated out of hearing—keeping, however, a careful eye on the criminal's motions. After waiting an instant till the unhappy man should speak, as he still remained silent, Quentin at length addressed him, "And to this conclusion thou hast at length arrived?"

"Ay," answered Hayraddin, "it required neither astrologer, nor physiognomist, nor chiromantist, to foretell that I should follow the destiny of my family."

"Brought to this early end by thy long course of crime and treachery?" said the Scot.

"No, by the bright Aldeboran and all his brother twinklers!" answered the Bohemian. "I am brought hither by my folly in believing that the bloodthirsty cruelty of a Frank could be restrained even by what they themselves profess to hold most sacred. A priest's vestment would have been no safer garb for me than a herald's tabard, however sanctimonious are your professions of devotion and chivalry."

"A detected impostor has no right to claim the immunities of the disguise he had usurped," said Durward.

"Detected!" said the Bohemian. "My jargon was as good

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as yonder old fool of a herald's;—but let it pass. As well now as hereafter."

"You abuse time," said Quentin. "If you have aught to tell me, say it quickly, and then take some care of your soul."

"Of my soul?" said the Bohemian, with a hideous laugh. "Think ye a leprosy of twenty years can be cured in an instant?—If I have a soul, it hath been in such a course since I was ten years old and more, that it would take me one month to recall all my crimes, and another to tell them to the priest!—and were such space granted me, it is five to one I would employ it otherwise."

"Hardened wretch, blaspheme not! Tell me what thou hast to say, and I leave thee to thy fate," said Durward, with mingled pity and horror.

"I have a boon to ask," said Hayraddin,—"but first I will buy it of you; for your tribe, with all their professions of charity, give nought for nought."

"I could well-nigh say, thy gifts perish with thee," answered Quentin, "but that thou art on the very verge of eternity.—Ask thy boon—reserve thy bounty—it can do me no good—I remember enough of your good offices of old."

"Why, I loved you," said Hayraddin, "for the matter that chanced on the banks of the Cher; and I would have helped you to a wealthy dame. You wore her scarf, which partly misled me; and indeed I thought that Hameline, with her portable wealth, was more for your market-penny than the other hen-sparrow, with her old roost at Bracquemont, which Charles has clutched, and is likely to keep his claws upon."

"Talk not so idly, unhappy man," said Quentin; "yonder officers become impatient."

"Give them ten guilders for ten minutes more," said the culprit,—who, like most in his situation, mixed with his hardihood a desire of procrastinating his fate,—"I tell thee it shall avail thee much."

"Use then well the minutes so purchased," said Durward, and easily made a new bargain with the Marshal's men.

This done, Hayraddin continued.—"Yes, I assure you I meant you well; and Hameline would have proved an easy and convenient spouse. Why, she has reconciled herself even with the Boar of Ardennes, though his mode of wooing was

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somewhat of the roughest, and lords it yonder in his sty, as if she had fed on mast-husks and acorns all her life."

"Cease this brutal and untimely jesting," said Quentin, "or, once more I tell you, I will leave you to your fate."

"You are right," said Hayraddin, after a moment's pause; "what cannot be postponed must be faced!—Well, know then, I came hither in this accursed disguise, moved by a great reward from De la Marck, and hoping a yet mightier one from King Louis, not merely to bear the message of defiance which you may have heard of, but to tell the King an important secret."

"It was a fearful risk," said Durward.

"It was paid for as such, and such it hath proved," answered the Bohemian. "De la Marck attempted before to communicate with Louis by means of Marthon; but she could not, it seems, approach nearer to him than the astrologer, to whom she told all the passages of the journey, and of Schonwaldt; but it is a chance if her tidings ever reach Louis, except in the shape of a prophecy. But hear my secret, which is more important than aught she could tell. William de la Marck has assembled a numerous and strong force within the city of Liege, and augments it daily by means of the old priest's treasures. But he proposes not to hazard a battle with the chivalry of Burgundy, and still less to stand a siege in the dismantled town. This he will do—he will suffer the hot-brained Charles to sit down before the place without opposition; and in the night make an outfall or sally upon the leaguer with his whole force. Many he will have in French armour, who will cry, France, Saint Louis, and Denis Montjoye, as if there were a strong body of French auxiliaries in the city. This cannot choose but strike utter confusion among the Burgundians; and if King Louis with his guards, attendants, and such soldiers as he may have with him, shall second his efforts, the Boar of Ardennes nothing doubts the discomfiture of the whole Burgundian army. There is my secret, and I bequeath it to you. Forward, or prevent the enterprise—sell the intelligence to King Louis, or to Duke Charles, I care not—save or destroy whom thou wilt; for my part, I only grieve that I cannot spring it like a mine, to the destruction of them all!"

"It is indeed an important secret," said Quentin, instantly comprehending how easily the national jealousy might be

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awakened in a camp consisting partly of French, partly of Burgundians.

"Ay, so it is," answered Hayraddin; "and, now you have it, you would fain begone, and leave me without granting the boon for which I have paid beforehand."

"Tell me thy request," said Quentin—"I will grant it if it be in my power."

"Nay, it is no mighty demand—it is only in behalf of poor Klepper, my palfrey, the only living thing that may miss me. —A due mile south, you will find him feeding by a deserted collier's hut; whistle to him thus,"—(he whistled a peculiar note), "and call him by his name, Klepper, he will come to you; here is his bridle under my gaberdine—it is lucky the hounds got it not, for he obeys no other. Take him, and make much of him—I do not say for his master's sake,—but because I have placed at your disposal the event of a mighty war. He will never fail you at need—night and day, rough and smooth, fair and foul, warm stables and the winter sky, are the same to Klepper; had I cleared the gates of Peronne, and got so far as where I left him, I had not been in this case.—Will you be kind to Klepper?"

"I swear to you that I will," answered Quentin, affected by what seemed a trait of tenderness in a character so hardened.

"Then fare thee well!" said the criminal—"Yet stay—stay—I would not willingly die in discourtesy, forgetting a lady's commission.—This billet is from the very gracious and extremely silly Lady of the Wild Boar of Ardennes, to her black-eyed niece—I see by your look I have chosen a willing messenger.—And one word more—I forgot to say that in the stuffing of my saddle you will find a rich purse of gold pieces, for the sake of which I put my life on the venture which has cost me so dear. Take them, and replace a hundred-fold the guilders you have bestowed on these bloody slaves—I make you mine heir."

"I will bestow them in good works and masses for the benefit of thy soul," said Quentin.

"Name not that word again," said Hayraddin, his countenance assuming a dreadful expression; "there is—there can be—there shall be—no such thing!—it is a dream of priestcraft!"

"Unhappy—most unhappy being! Think better!—let me

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speed for a priest—these men will delay yet a little longer—I will bribe them to it," said Quentin—"What canst thou expect, dying in such opinions, and impenitent?"

"To be resolved into the elements," said the hardened atheist, pressing his fettered arms against his bosom; "my hope, trust, and expectation is, that the mysterious frame of humanity shall melt into the general mass of nature, to be recompounded in the other forms with which she daily supplies those which daily disappear, and return under different forms, —the watery particles to streams and showers, the earthy parts to enrich their mother earth, the airy portions to wanton in the breeze, and those of fire to supply the blaze of Aldeboran and his brethren—In this faith have I lived, and I will die in it!—Hence! begone!—disturb me no farther!—I have spoken the last word that mortal ears shall listen to!"

Deeply impressed with the horrors of his condition, Quentin Durward yet saw that it was vain to hope to awaken him to a sense of his fearful state. He bade him, therefore, farewell; to which the criminal only replied by a short and sullen nod, as one who, plunged in reverie, bids adieu to company which distracts his thoughts. He bent his course towards the forest, and easily found where Klepper was feeding. The creature came at his call, but was for some time unwilling to be caught, snuffing and starting when the stranger approached him. At length, however, Quentin's general acquaintance with the habits of the animal, and perhaps some particular knowledge of those of Klepper, which he had often admired while Hayraddin and he travelled together, enabled him to take possession of the Bohemian's dying bequest. Long ere he returned to Peronne, the Bohemian had gone where the vanity of his dreadful creed was to be put to the final issue—a fearful experience for one who had neither expressed remorse for the past, nor apprehension for the future!

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CHAPTER THIRTY-FIFTH.

A PRIZE FOR HONOUR.

'Tis brave for Beauty when the best blade wins her.
THE COUNT PALATINE.

WHEN Quentin Durward reached Peronne, a council was sitting, in the issue of which he was interested more deeply than he could have apprehended, and which, though held by persons of a rank with whom one of his could scarce be supposed to have community of interest, had nevertheless the most extraordinary influence on his fortunes.

King Louis, who, after the interlude of De la Marck's envoy, had omitted no opportunity to cultivate the returning interest which that circumstance had given him in the Duke's opinion, had been engaged in consulting him, or, it might be almost said, receiving his opinion, upon the number and quality of the troops, by whom, as auxiliary to the Duke of Burgundy, he was to be attended in their joint expedition against Liege. He plainly saw the wish of Charles was to call into his camp such Frenchmen as, from their small number and high quality, might be considered rather as hostages than as auxiliaries; but, observant of Crèvecœur's advice, he assented as readily to whatever the Duke proposed, as if it had arisen from the free impulse of his own mind.

The King failed not, however, to indemnify himself for his complaisance, by the indulgence of his vindictive temper against Balue, whose counsels had led him to repose such exuberant trust in the Duke of Burgundy. Tristan, who bore the summons for moving up his auxiliary forces, had the farther commission to carry the Cardinal to the Castle of Loches, and there shut him up in one of those iron cages which he himself is said to have invented.

"Let him make proof of his own devices," said the King; "he is a man of holy church—we may not shed his blood; but, *Pasques-dieu!* his bishopric, for ten years to come, shall have an impregnable frontier to make up for its small extent! —And see the troops are brought up instantly."

Perhaps by this prompt acquiescence, Louis hoped to evade

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the more unpleasing condition with which the Duke had clogged their reconciliation. But if he so hoped, he greatly mistook the temper of his cousin; for never man lived more tenacious of his purpose than Charles of Burgundy, and least of all was he willing to relax any stipulation which he made in resentment, or revenge of a supposed injury.

No sooner were the necessary expresses despatched to summon up the forces who were selected to act as auxiliaries, than Louis was called upon by his host to give public consent to the espousals of the Duke of Orleans and Isabelle of Croye. The King complied with a heavy sigh, and presently after urged a slight expostulation, founded upon the necessity of observing the wishes of the Duke himself.

"These have not been neglected," said the Duke of Burgundy; "Crèvecœur hath communicated with Monsieur d'Orleans, and finds him (strange to say) so dead to the honour of wedding a royal bride, that he acceded to the proposal of marrying the Countess of Croye as the kindest proposal which father could have made to him."

"He is the more ungracious and thankless," said Louis; "but the whole shall be as you, my cousin, will; if you can bring it about with consent of the parties themselves."

"Fear not that," said the Duke; and accordingly, not many minutes after the affair had been proposed, the Duke of Orleans and the Countess of Croye, the latter attended, as on the preceding occasion, by the Countess of Crèvecœur, and the Abbess of the Ursulines, were summoned to the presence of the Princes, and heard from the mouth of Charles of Burgundy, unobjected to by that of Louis, who sat in silent and moody consciousness of diminished consequence, that the union of their hands was designed by the wisdom of both Princes, to confirm the perpetual alliance which in future should take place betwixt France and Burgundy.

The Duke of Orleans had much difficulty in suppressing the joy which he felt upon the proposal, and which delicacy rendered improper in the presence of Louis; and it required his habitual awe of that monarch to enable him to rein in his delight, so much as merely to reply, "that his duty compelled him to place his choice at the disposal of his Sovereign."

"Fair cousin of Orleans," said Louis, with sullen gravity, "since I must speak on so unpleasant an occasion, it is needless

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for me to remind you that my sense of your merits had led me to propose for you a match into my own family. But since my cousin of Burgundy thinks that the disposing of your hand otherwise is the surest pledge of amity between his dominions and mine, I love both too well not to sacrifice to them my own hopes and wishes."

The Duke of Orleans threw himself on his knees, and kissed,—and, for once, with sincerity of attachment,—the hand which the King, with averted countenance, extended to him. In fact he, as well as most present, saw, in the unwilling acquiescence of this accomplished dissembler, who, even with that very purpose, had suffered his reluctance to be visible, a King relinquishing his favourite project, and subjugating his paternal feelings to the necessities of state, and interest of his country. Even Burgundy was moved, and Orleans' heart smote him for the joy which he involuntarily felt on being freed from his engagement with the Princess Joan. If he had known how deeply the King was cursing him in his soul, and what thoughts of future revenge he was agitating, it is probable his own delicacy on the occasion would not have been so much hurt.

Charles next turned to the young Countess, and bluntly announced the proposed match to her, as a matter which neither admitted delay nor hesitation; adding, at the same time, that it was but a too favourable consequence of her intractability on a former occasion.

"My Lord Duke and Sovereign," said Isabelle, summoning up all her courage, "I observe your Grace's commands, and submit to them."

"Enough, enough," said the Duke, interrupting her, "we will arrange the rest.—Your Majesty," he continued, addressing King Louis, "hath had a boar's hunt in the morning, what say you to rousing a wolf in the afternoon?"

The young Countess saw the necessity of decision.—"Your Grace mistakes my meaning," she said, speaking, though timidly, yet loudly and decidedly enough to compel the Duke's attention, which, from some consciousness, he would otherwise have willingly denied to her.—"My submission," she said, "only respected those lands and estates which your Grace's ancestors gave to mine, and which I resign to the House of Burgundy, if my Sovereign thinks my disobedience in this matter renders me unworthy to hold them."

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"Ha! Saint George!" said the Duke, stamping furiously on the ground, "does the fool know in what presence she is—and to whom she speaks?"

"My lord," she replied, still undismayed, "I am before my Suzerain, and, I trust, a just one. If you deprive me of my lands, you take away all that your ancestors' generosity gave, and you break the only bonds which attach us together. You gave not this poor and persecuted form, still less the spirit which animates me—And these it is my purpose to dedicate to Heaven in the convent of the Ursulines, under the guidance of this Holy Mother Abbess."

The rage and astonishment of the Duke can hardly be conceived, unless we could estimate the surprise of a falcon, against whom a dove should ruffle its pinions in defiance.—"Will the Holy Mother receive you without an appanage?" he said, in a voice of scorn.

"If she doth her convent, in the first instance, so much wrong," said the Lady Isabelle, "I trust there is charity enough among the noble friends of my house, to make up some support for the orphan of Croye."

"It is false!" said the Duke; "it is a base pretext to cover some secret and unworthy passion.—My Lord of Orleans, she shall be yours, if I drag her to the altar with my own hands!"

The Countess of Crèvecœur, a high-spirited woman, and confident in her husband's merits and his favour with the Duke, could keep silent no longer. "My lord," she said, "your passions transport you into language utterly unworthy—The hand of no gentlewoman can be disposed of by force."

"And it is no part of the duty of a Christian Prince," added the Abbess, "to thwart the wishes of a pious soul, who, broken with the cares and persecutions of the world, is desirous to become the bride of Heaven."

"Neither can my cousin of Orleans," said Dunois, "with honour accept a proposal, to which the lady has thus publicly stated her objections."

"If I were permitted," said Orleans, on whose facile mind Isabelle's beauty had made a deep impression, "some time to endeavour to place my pretensions before the Countess in a more favourable light"——

"My lord," said Isabelle, whose firmness was now fully supported by the encouragement which she received from all

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around, "it were to no purpose—my mind is made up to decline this alliance, though far above my deserts."

"Nor have I time," said the Duke, "to wait till these whimsies are changed with the next change of the moon.—Monseigneur d'Orleans, she shall learn within this hour, that obedience becomes matter of necessity."

"Not in my behalf, Sire," answered the Prince, who felt that he could not, with any show of honour, avail himself of the Duke's obstinate disposition; "to have been once openly and positively refused, is enough for a son of France. He cannot prosecute his addresses farther."

The Duke darted one furious glance at Orleans, another at Louis; and reading in the countenance of the latter, in spite of his utmost efforts to suppress his feelings, a look of secret triumph, he became outrageous.

"Write," he said, to the Secretary, "our doom of forfeiture and imprisonment against this disobedient and insolent minion. She shall to the Zuchthaus, to the penitentiary, to herd with those whose lives have rendered them her rivals in effrontery!"

There was a general murmur.

"My Lord Duke," said the Count of Crèvecœur, taking the word for the rest, "this must be better thought on. We, your faithful vassals, cannot suffer such a dishonour to the nobility and chivalry of Burgundy. If the Countess hath done amiss, let her be punished—but in the manner that becomes her rank, and ours, who stand connected with her house by blood and alliance."

The Duke paused a moment, and looked full at his councillor with the stare of a bull which, when compelled by the neat-herd from the road which he wishes to go, deliberates with himself whether to obey, or to rush on his driver, and toss him into the air.

Prudence, however, prevailed over fury—he saw the sentiment was general in his council—was afraid of the advantages which Louis might derive from seeing dissension among his vassals; and probably—for he was rather of a coarse and violent, than of a malignant temper—felt ashamed of his own dishonourable proposal.

"You are right," he said, "Crèvecœur, and I spoke hastily. Her fate shall be determined according to the rules of chivalry. Her flight to Liege hath given the signal for the Bishop's

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murder. He that best avenges that deed, and brings us the head of the Wild Boar of Ardennes, shall claim her hand of us; and if she denies his right, we can at least grant him her fiefs, leaving it to his generosity to allow her what means he will to retire into a convent."

"Nay!" said the Countess, "think I am the daughter of Count Reinold—of your father's old, valiant, and faithful servant. Would you hold me out as a prize to the best sword-player?"

"Your ancestress," said the Duke, "was won at a tourney—you shall be fought for in real *mêlée*. Only thus far, for Count Reinold's sake, the successful prizer shall be a gentleman of unimpeached birth, and unstained bearings; but, be he such, and the poorest who ever drew the strap of a sword-belt through the tongue of a buckle, he shall have at least the proffer of your hand. I swear it, by St. George, by my ducal crown, and by the Order that I wear!—Ha! Messires," he added, turning to the nobles present, "this at least is, I think, in conformity with the rules of chivalry?"

Isabelle's remonstrances were drowned in a general and jubilant assent, above which was heard the voice of old Lord Crawford, regretting the weight of years that prevented his striking for so fair a prize. The Duke was gratified by the general applause, and his temper began to flow more smoothly, like that of a swollen river when it hath subsided within its natural boundaries.

"Are we, to whom fate has given dames already," said Crèvecœur, "to be bystanders at this fair game? It does not consist with my honour to be so, for I have myself a vow to be paid at the expense of that tusked and bristled brute, De la Marck."

"Strike boldly in, Crèvecœur," said the Duke; "win her, and since thou canst not wear her thyself, bestow her where thou wilt—on Count Stephen, your nephew, if you list."

"Gramercy, my lord!" said Crèvecœur, "I will do my best in the battle; and, should I be fortunate enough to be foremost, Stephen shall try his eloquence against that of the Lady Abbess."

"I trust," said Dunois, "that the chivalry of France are not excluded from this fair contest?"

"Heaven forbid! brave Dunois," answered the Duke, "were

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it but for the sake of seeing you do your uttermost. But," he added, "though there be no fault in the Lady Isabelle wedding a Frenchman, it will be necessary that the Count of Croye must become a subject of Burgundy."

"Enough, enough," said Dunois; "my bar sinister may never be surmounted by the Coronet of Croye—I will live and die French. But yet, though I should lose the lands, I will strike a blow for the lady."

Le Balafré dared not speak aloud in such a presence, but he muttered to himself—

"Now, Saunders Souplejaw, hold thine own!—thou always saidst the fortune of our house was to be won by marriage, and never had you such a chance to keep your word with us."

"No one thinks of me," said Le Glorieux, "who am sure to carry off the prize from all of you."

"Right, my sapient friend," said Louis; "when a woman is in the case, the greatest fool is ever the first in favour."

While the princes and their nobles thus jested over her fate, the Abbess and the Countess of Crèvecœur endeavoured in vain to console Isabelle, who had withdrawn with them from the council-presence. The former assured her, that the Holy Virgin would frown on every attempt to withdraw a true votaress from the shrine of Saint Ursula; while the Countess of Crèvecœur whispered more temporal consolation, that no true knight, who might succeed in the emprise proposed, would avail himself, against her inclinations, of the Duke's award; and that perhaps the successful competitor might prove one who should find such favour in her eyes as to reconcile her to obedience. Love, like despair, catches at straws; and, faint and vague as was the hope which this insinuation conveyed, the tears of the Countess Isabelle flowed more placidly while she dwelt upon it.*

* The perilling the hand of an heiress upon the event of a battle was not so likely to take place in the fourteenth century as when the laws of chivalry were in more general observance. Yet it was not unlikely to occur to so absolute a Prince as Duke Charles, in circumstances like those supposed.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-SIXTH.

THE SALLY.

The wretch condemn'd with life to part,
  Still, still on hope relies,
And every pang that rends the heart
  Bids expectation rise.

Hope, like the glimmering taper's light,
  Adorns and cheers the way;
And still, the darker grows the night,
  Emits a brighter ray.

GOLDSMITH.

FEW days had passed ere Louis had received, with a smile of gratified vengeance, the intelligence, that his favourite and his councillor, the Cardinal Balue, was groaning within a cage of iron, so disposed as scarce to permit him to enjoy repose in any posture except when recumbent; and of which, be it said in passing, he remained the unpitied tenant for nearly twelve years. The auxiliary forces which the Duke had required Louis to bring up had also appeared; and he comforted himself that their numbers were sufficient to protect his person against violence, although too limited to cope, had such been his purpose, with the large army of Burgundy. He saw himself also at liberty, when time should suit, to resume his project of marriage between his daughter and the Duke of Orleans; and although he was sensible to the indignity of serving with his noblest peers under the banners of his own vassal, and against the people whose cause he had abetted, he did not allow these circumstances to embarrass him in the meantime, trusting that a future day would bring him amends.—"For chance," said he to his trusty Oliver, "may indeed gain one hit, but it is patience and wisdom which win the game at last."

With such sentiments, upon a beautiful day in the latter end of harvest, the King mounted his horse; and, indifferent that he was looked upon rather as a part of the pageant of a victor, than in the light of an independent Sovereign surrounded by his guards and his chivalry, King Louis sallied from under the Gothic gateway of Peronne, to join the Burgundian army, which commenced at the same time its march against Liege.

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Most of the ladies of distinction who were in the place attended, dressed in their best array, upon the battlements and defences of the gate, to see the gallant show of the warriors setting forth on the expedition. Thither had the Countess Crèvecœur brought the Countess Isabelle. The latter attended very reluctantly; but the peremptory order of Charles had been, that she who was to bestow the palm in the tourney, should be visible to the knights who were about to enter the lists.

As they thronged out from under the arch, many a pennon and shield was to be seen, graced with fresh devices, expressive of the bearer's devoted resolution to become a competitor for a prize so fair. Here a charger was painted starting for the goal —there an arrow aimed at a mark—one knight bore a bleeding heart, indicative of his passion—another a skull and a coronet of laurels, showing his determination to win or die. Many others there were; and some so cunningly intricate and obscure, that they might have defied the most ingenious interpreter. Each knight, too, it may be presumed, put his courser to his mettle, and assumed his most gallant seat in the saddle, as he passed for a moment under the view of the fair bevy of dames and damsels, who encouraged their valour by their smiles, and the waving of kerchiefs and of veils. The Archer Guard, selected almost at will from the flower of the Scottish nation, drew general applause, from the gallantry and splendour of their appearance.

And there was one among these strangers, who ventured on a demonstration of acquaintance with the Lady Isabelle, which had not been attempted even by the most noble of the French nobility. It was Quentin Durward, who, as he passed the ladies in his rank, presented to the Countess of Croye, on the point of his lance, the letter of her aunt.

"Now, by my honour," said the Count of Crèvecœur, "that is over insolent in an unworthy adventurer!"

"Do not call him so, Crèvecœur," said Dunois; "I have good reason to bear testimony to his gallantry—and in behalf of that lady, too."

"You make words of nothing," said Isabelle, blushing with shame, and partly with resentment; "it is a letter from my unfortunate aunt—She writes cheerfully, though her situation must be dreadful."

"Let us hear, let us hear what says the Boar's bride," said Crèvecœur.

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The Countess Isabelle read the letter, in which her aunt seemed determined to make the best of a bad bargain, and to console herself for the haste and indecorum of her nuptials, by the happiness of being wedded to one of the bravest men of the age, who had just acquired a princedom by his valour. She implored her niece not to judge of her William (as she called him) by the report of others, but to wait till she knew him personally. He had his faults, perhaps, but they were such as belonged to characters whom she had ever venerated. William was rather addicted to wine, but so was the gallant Sir Godfrey, her grandsire;—he was something hasty and sanguinary in his temper, such had been her brother Reinold of blessed memory; he was blunt in speech, few Germans were otherwise; and a little wilful and peremptory, but she believed all men loved to rule. More there was to the same purpose; and the whole concluded with the hope and request, that Isabelle would, by means of the bearer, endeavour her escape from the tyrant of Burgundy, and come to her loving kinswoman's Court of Liege, where any little differences concerning their mutual rights of succession to the Earldom might be adjusted by Isabelle's marrying Earl Eberson—a bridegroom younger indeed than his bride, but that, as she (the Lady Hameline) might perhaps say from experience, was an inequality more easy to be endured than Isabelle could be aware of.*

Here the Countess Isabelle stopped; the Abbess observing, with a prim aspect, that she had read quite enough concerning such worldly vanities, and the Count of Crèvecœur breaking out, "Aroint thee, deceitful witch!—Why, this device smells rank as the toasted cheese in a rat-trap—Now fie, and double fie, upon the old decoy-duck!"

The Countess of Crèvecœur gravely rebuked her husband for his violence—"The Lady Hameline," she said, "must have been deceived by De la Marck with a show of courtesy."

"He show courtesy!" said the Count—"I acquit him of all such dissimulation. You may as well expect courtesy from a literal wild boar—you may as well try to lay leaf-gold on old rusty gibbet-irons. No—idiot as she is, she is not quite goose

* It is almost unnecessary to add, that the marriage of William de la Marck with the Lady Hameline is as apocryphal as the lady herself. The real bride of the Wild Boar of Ardennes was Joan D'Arschel, Baroness of Scoonhoven.

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enough to fall in love with the fox who has snapped her, and that in his very den. But you women are all alike—fair words carry it—and, I dare say, here is my pretty cousin impatient to join her aunt in this fool's paradise, and marry the Boar-Pig."

"So far from being capable of such folly," said Isabelle, "I am doubly desirous of vengeance on the murderers of the excellent Bishop, because it will, at the same time, free my aunt from the villain's power."

"Ah! there indeed spoke the voice of Croye!" exclaimed the Count; and no more was said concerning the letter.

But while Isabelle read her aunt's epistle to her friends, it must be observed that she did not think it necessary to recite a certain *postscript*, in which the Countess Hameline, lady-like, gave an account of her occupations, and informed her niece, that she had laid aside for the present a surcoat which she was working for her husband, bearing the arms of Croye and La Marck in conjugal fashion, parted per pale, because her William had determined, for purposes of policy, in the first action to have others dressed in his coat-armour, and himself to assume the arms of Orleans, with a bar sinister—in other words, those of Dunois. There was also a slip of paper in another hand, the contents of which the Countess did not think it necessary to mention, being simply these words—"If you hear not of me soon, and that by the trumpet of Fame, conclude me dead, but not unworthy."

A thought, hitherto repelled as wildly incredible, now glanced, with double keenness, through Isabelle's soul. As female wit seldom fails in the contrivance of means, she so ordered it, that ere the troops were fully on march, Quentin Durward received from an unknown hand the billet of Lady Hameline, marked with three crosses opposite to the postscript, and having these words subjoined:—"He who feared not the arms of Orleans when on the breast of their gallant owner, cannot dread them when displayed on that of a tyrant and murderer." A thousand thousand times was this intimation kissed and pressed to the bosom of the young Scot! for it marshalled him on the path where both Honour and Love held out the reward, and possessed him with a secret unknown to others, by which to distinguish him whose death could alone give life to his hopes, and which he prudently resolved to lock up in his own bosom.

But Durward saw the necessity of acting otherwise respecting

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the information communicated by Hayraddin, since the proposed sally of De la Marck, unless heedfully guarded against, might prove the destruction of the besieging army; so difficult was it, in the tumultuous warfare of those days, to recover from a nocturnal surprise. After pondering on the matter, he formed the additional resolution, that he would not communicate the intelligence save personally, and to both the Princes while together; perhaps, because he felt that to mention so well-contrived and hopeful a scheme to Louis whilst in private, might be too strong a temptation to the wavering probity of that Monarch, and lead him to assist, rather than repel, the intended sally. He determined, therefore, to watch for an opportunity of revealing the secret whilst Louis and Charles were met, which, as they were not particularly fond of the constraint imposed by each other's society, was not likely soon to occur.

Meanwhile the march continued, and the confederates soon entered the territories of Liege. Here the Burgundian soldiers, at least a part of them, composed of those bands who had acquired the title of *Ecorcheurs*, or flayers, showed, by the usage which they gave the inhabitants, under pretext of avenging the Bishop's death, that they well deserved that honourable title; while their conduct greatly prejudiced the cause of Charles, the aggrieved inhabitants, who might otherwise have been passive in the quarrel, assuming arms in self-defence, harassing his march, by cutting off small parties, and falling back before the main body upon the city itself, thus augmenting the numbers and desperation of those who had resolved to defend it. The French, few in number, and those the choice soldiers of the country, kept, according to the King's orders, close by their respective standards, and observed the strictest discipline; a contrast which increased the suspicions of Charles, who could not help remarking, that the troops of Louis demeaned themselves as if they were rather friends to the Liegeois, than allies of Burgundy.

At length, without experiencing any serious opposition, the army arrived in the rich valley of the Maes, and before the large and populous city of Liege. The Castle of Schonwaldt they found had been totally destroyed, and learned that William de la Marck, whose only talents were of a military cast, had withdrawn his whole forces into the city, and was determined to avoid the encounter of the chivalry of France and Burgundy in

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the open field. But the invaders were not long of experiencing the danger which must always exist in attacking a large town, however open, if the inhabitants are disposed to defend it desperately.

A part of the Burgundian vanguard, conceiving that, from the dismantled and breached state of the walls, they had nothing to do but to march into Liege at their ease, entered one of the suburbs with the shouts of "Burgundy, Burgundy! Kill, kill—all is ours—Remember Louis of Bourbon!" But as they marched in disorder through the narrow streets, and were partly dispersed for the purpose of pillage, a large body of the inhabitants issued suddenly from the town, fell furiously upon them, and made considerable slaughter. De la Marck even availed himself of the breaches in the walls, which permitted the defenders to issue out at different points, and, by taking separate routes into the contested suburb, to attack, in the front, flank, and rear, at once, the assailants, who, stunned by the furious, unexpected, and multiplied nature of the resistance offered, could hardly stand to their arms. The evening, which began to close, added to their confusion.

When this news was brought to Duke Charles, he was furious with rage, which was not much appeased by the offer of King Louis, to send the French men-at-arms into the suburbs, to rescue and bring off the Burgundian vanguard. Rejecting this offer briefly, he would have put himself at the head of his own Guards, to extricate those engaged in the incautious advance; but D'Hymbercourt and Crèvecœur entreated him to leave the service to them, and, marching into the scene of action at two points, with more order and proper arrangement for mutual support, these two celebrated captains succeeded in repulsing the Liegeois, and in extricating the vanguard, who lost, besides prisoners, no fewer than eight hundred men, of whom about a hundred were men-at-arms. The prisoners, however, were not numerous, most of them having been rescued by D'Hymbercourt, who now proceeded to occupy the contested suburb, and to place guards opposite to the town, from which it was divided by an open space, or esplanade, of five or six hundred yards, left free of buildings for the purposes of defence. There was no moat betwixt the suburb and town, the ground being rocky in that place. A gate fronted the suburb, from which sallies might be easily made, and the wall was pierced by two or three

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of those breaches which Duke Charles had caused to be made after the battle of Saint Tron, and which had been hastily repaired with mere barricades of timber. D'Hymbercourt turned two culverins on the gate, and placed two others opposite to the principal breach, to repel any sally from the city, and then returned to the Burgundian army, which he found in great disorder.

In fact, the main body and rear of the numerous army of the Duke had continued to advance, while the broken and repulsed vanguard was in the act of retreating; and they had come into collision with each other, to the great confusion of both. The necessary absence of D'Hymbercourt, who discharged all the duties of Maréchal du Camp, or, as we should now say, of Quarter-master-general, augmented the disorder; and to complete the whole, the night sank down dark as a wolf's mouth: there fell a thick and heavy rain, and the ground, on which the beleaguering army must needs take up their position, was muddy and intersected with many canals. It is scarce possible to form an idea of the confusion which prevailed in the Burgundian army, where leaders were separated from their soldiers, and soldiers from their standards and officers. Every one, from the highest to the lowest, was seeking shelter and accommodation where he could individually find it; while the wearied and wounded, who had been engaged in the battle, were calling in vain for shelter and refreshment; and while those who knew nothing of the disaster were pressing on to have their share in the sack of the place, which they had no doubt was proceeding merrily.

When D'Hymbercourt returned, he had a task to perform of incredible difficulty, and imbittered by the reproaches of his master, who made no allowance for the still more necessary duty in which he had been engaged, until the temper of the gallant soldier began to give way under the Duke's unreasonable reproaches.—"I went hence to restore some order in the van," he said, "and left the main body under your Grace's own guidance; and now, on my return, I can neither find that we have front, flank, nor rear, so utter is the confusion."

"We are the more like a barrel of herrings," answered Le Glorieux, "which is the most natural resemblance for a Flemish army."

The jester's speech made the Duke laugh, and perhaps pre-

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vented a farther prosecution of the altercation betwixt him and his general.

By dint of great exertion, a small lust-haus, or country villa of some wealthy citizen of Liege, was secured and cleared of other occupants, for the accommodation of the Duke and his immediate attendants; and the authority of D'Hymbercourt and Crèvecœur at length established a guard in the vicinity, of about forty men-at-arms, who lighted a very large fire, made with the timber of the out-houses, which they pulled down for the purpose.

A little to the left of this villa, and betwixt it and the suburb, which, as we have said, was opposite to the city-gate, and occupied by the Burgundian vanguard, lay another pleasure-house, surrounded by a garden and courtyard, and having two or three small enclosures or fields in the rear of it. In this the King of France established his own head-quarters. He did not himself pretend to be a soldier further than a natural indifference to danger and much sagacity qualified him to be called such; but he was always careful to employ the most skilful in that profession, and reposed in them the confidence they merited. Louis and his immediate attendants occupied this second villa; a part of his Scottish Guard were placed in the court, where there were out-houses and sheds to shelter them from the weather; the rest were stationed in the garden. The remainder of the French men-at-arms were quartered closely together and in good order, with alarm-posts stationed, in case of their having to sustain an attack.

Dunois and Crawford, assisted by several old officers and soldiers, amongst whom Le Balafré was conspicuous for his diligence, contrived, by breaking down walls, making openings through hedges, filling up ditches, and the like, to facilitate the communication of the troops with each other, and the orderly combination of the whole in case of necessity.

Meanwhile, the King judged it proper to go without farther ceremony to the quarters of the Duke of Burgundy, to ascertain what was to be the order of proceeding, and what co-operation was expected from him. His presence occasioned a sort of council of war to be held, of which Charles might not otherwise have dreamed.

It was then that Quentin Durward prayed earnestly to be admitted, as having something of importance to deliver to the

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two Princes. This was obtained without much difficulty, and great was the astonishment of Louis, when he heard him calmly and distinctly relate the purpose of William de la Marck to make a sally upon the camp of the besiegers, under the dress and banners of the French. Louis would probably have been much better pleased to have had such important news communicated in private; but as the whole story had been publicly told in presence of the Duke of Burgundy, he only observed, "that, whether true or false, such a report concerned them most materially."

"Not a whit!—not a whit!—said the Duke, carelessly. "Had there been such a purpose as this young man announces, it had not been communicated to me by an Archer of the Scottish Guard."

"However that may be," answered Louis, "I pray you, fair cousin, you and your captains, to attend, that to prevent the unpleasing consequences of such an attack, should it be made unexpectedly, I will cause my soldiers to wear white scarfs over their armour—Dunois, see it given out on the instant—that is," he added, "if our brother and general approves of it."

"I see no objection," replied the Duke, "if the chivalry of France are willing to run the risk of having the name of the Knights of the Smock-sleeve bestowed on them in future."

"It would be a right well adapted title, friend Charles," said Le Glorieux, "considering that a woman is the reward of the most valiant."

"Well spoken, Sagacity," said Louis—"Cousin, good-night, I will go arm me.—By the way, what if I win the Countess with mine own hand?"

"Your Majesty," said the Duke, in an altered tone of voice, "must then become a true Fleming."

"I cannot," answered Louis, in a tone of the most sincere confidence, "be more so than I am already, could I but bring you, my dear cousin, to believe it."

The Duke only replied by wishing the King good-night, in a tone resembling the snort of a shy horse, starting from the caress of the rider when he is about to mount, and is soothing him to stand still.

"I could pardon all his duplicity," said the Duke to Crèvecœur, "but cannot forgive his supposing me capable of the gross folly of being duped by his professions."

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Louis, too, had his conferences with Oliver le Dain, when he returned to his own quarters.—"This Scot," he said, "is such a mixture of shrewdness and simplicity, that I know not what to make of him. *Pasques-dieu!* think of his unpardonable folly in bringing out honest De la Marck's plan of a sally before the face of Burgundy, Crèvecœur, and all of them, instead of rounding it in my ear, and giving me at least the choice of abetting or defeating it!"

"It is better as it is, Sire," said Oliver; "there are many in your present train who would scruple to assail Burgundy undefied, or to ally themselves with De la Marck."

"Thou art right, Oliver. Such fools there are in the world, and we have no time to reconcile their scruples by a little dose of self-interest. We must be true men, Oliver, and good allies of Burgundy, for this night at least—time may give us a chance of better game. Go, tell no man to unarm himself; and let them shoot, in case of necessity, as sharply on those who cry *France* and *St. Denis!* as if they cried Hell and Satan! I will myself sleep in my armour. Let Crawford place Quentin Durward on the extreme point of our line of sentinels, next to the city. Let him e'en have the first benefit of the sally which he has announced to us—if his luck bear him out, it is the better for him. But take an especial care of Martius Galeotti, and see he remain in the rear, in a place of the most absolute safety—he is even but too venturous; and, like a fool, would be both swordsman and philosopher. See to these things, Oliver, and good-night—Our Lady of Clery, and Monseigneur St. Martin of Tours, be gracious to my slumbers!"*

* Note U. Attack on Liege.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVENTH.

THE SALLY.

He look'd, and saw what numbers numberless
The city-gates out-pour'd.

PARADISE REGAINED.

A DEAD silence soon reigned over that great host which lay in leaguer before Liege. For a long time the cries of the

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soldiers repeating their signals, and seeking to join their several banners, sounded like the howling of bewildered dogs seeking their masters. But at length, overcome with weariness by the fatigues of the day, the dispersed soldiers crowded under such shelter as they could meet with, and those who could find none sunk down through very fatigue under walls, hedges, and such temporary protection, there to await the morning—a morning which some of them were never to behold. A dead sleep fell on almost all, excepting those who kept a faint and weary watch by the lodgings of the King and the Duke. The dangers and hopes of the morrow—even the schemes of glory which many of the young nobility had founded upon the splendid prize held out to him who should avenge the murdered Bishop of Liege—glided from their recollection as they lay stupified with fatigue and sleep. But not so with Quentin Durward. The knowledge that he alone was possessed of the means of distinguishing La Marck in the contest—the recollection by whom that information had been communicated, and the fair augury which might be drawn from her conveying it to him—the thought that his fortune had brought him to a most perilous and doubtful crisis indeed, but one where there was still, at least, a chance of his coming off triumphant,—banished every desire to sleep, and strung his nerves with vigour, which defied fatigue.

Posted, by the King's express order, on the extreme point between the French quarters and the town, a good way to the right of the suburb which we have mentioned, he sharpened his eye to penetrate the mass which lay before him, and excited his ears, to catch the slightest sound which might announce any commotion in the beleaguered city. But its huge clocks had successively knelled three hours after midnight, and all continued still and silent as the grave.

At length, and just when Quentin began to think the attack would be deferred till day-break, and joyfully recollected that there would be then light enough to descry the Bar Sinister across the Fleur-de-lis of Orleans, he thought he heard in the city a humming murmur, like that of disturbed bees mustering for the defence of their hives. He listened—the noise continued; but it was of a character so undistinguished by any peculiar or precise sound, that it might be the murmur of a wind arising among the boughs of a distant grove, or perhaps some stream,

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swollen by the late rain, which was discharging itself into the sluggish Maes with more than usual clamour. Quentin was prevented by these considerations from instantly giving the alarm, which, if done carelessly, would have been a heavy offence.

But, when the noise rose louder, and seemed pouring at the same time towards his own post, and towards the suburb, he deemed it his duty to fall back as silently as possible, and call his uncle, who commanded the small body of Archers destined to his support. All were on their feet in a moment, and with as little noise as possible. In less than a second Lord Crawford was at their head, and, despatching an archer to alarm the King and his household, drew back his little party to some distance behind their watchfire, that they might not be seen by its light. The rushing sound, which had approached them more nearly, seemed suddenly to have ceased; but they still heard distinctly the more distant heavy tread of a large body of men approaching the suburb. "The lazy Burgundians are asleep on their post," whispered Crawford; "make for the suburb, Cunningham, and awaken the stupid oxen."

"Keep well to the rear as you go," said Durward; "if ever I heard the tread of mortal men, there is a strong body interposed between us and the suburb."

"Well said, Quentin, my dainty callant," said Crawford; "thou art a soldier beyond thy years. They only made halt till the others come forward.—I would I had some knowledge where they are!"

"I will creep forward, my lord," said Quentin, "and endeavour to bring you information."

"Do so, my bonny chield; thou hast sharp ears and eyes, and good-will—but take heed—I would not lose thee for two and a plack." *

Quentin, with his harquebuss ready prepared, stole forward, through ground which he had reconnoitred carefully in the twilight of the preceding evening, until he was not only certain that he was in the neighbourhood of a very large body of men, who were standing fast betwixt the King's quarters and the suburbs, but also that there was a detached party of smaller number in advance, and very close to him. They seemed to whisper together, as if uncertain what to do next. At last the steps of two or three *Enfans perdus*, detached from that smaller

* A homely Scottish expression for something you value.

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party, approached him so near as twice a pike's length. Seeing it impossible to retreat undiscovered, Quentin called out aloud, *Qui vive?*" and was answered by "*Vive Li—Li—ege—c'est-à-dire*" (added he who spoke, correcting himself), "*Vive la France!*" —Quentin instantly fired his harquebuss—a man groaned and fell, and he himself, under the instant but vague discharge of a number of pieces, the fire of which ran in a disorderly manner along the column, and showed it to be very numerous, hastened back to the main guard.

"Admirably done, my brave boy!" said Crawford.—"Now, callants, draw in within the courtyard—they are too many to mell with in the open field."

They drew within the courtyard and garden accordingly, where they found all in great order, and the King prepared to mount his horse.

"Whither away, Sire?" said Crawford; "you are safest here with your own people."

"Not so," said Louis, "I must instantly to the Duke. He must be convinced of our good faith at this critical moment, or we shall have both Liegeois and Burgundians upon us at once." And, springing on his horse, he bade Dunois command the French troops without the house, and Crawford the Archer-Guard and other household troops to defend the lust-haus and its enclosures. He commanded them to bring up two sakers, and as many falconets (pieces of cannon for the field), which had been left about half-a-mile in the rear; and, in the meantime, to make good their post, but by no means to advance, whatever success they might obtain; and having given these orders, he rode off, with a small escort, to the Duke's quarters.

The delay which permitted these arrangements to be carried fully into effect was owing to Quentin's having fortunately shot the proprietor of the house, who acted as guide to the column which was designed to attack it, and whose attack, had it been made instantly, might have had a chance of being successful.

Durward, who, by the King's order, attended him to the Duke's, found the latter in a state of choleric distemperature, which almost prevented his discharging the duties of a general, which were never more necessary; for, besides the noise of a close and furious combat which had now taken place in the suburb upon the left of their whole army,—besides the attack upon the King's quarters, which was fiercely maintained in the

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centre,—a third column of Liegeois, of even superior numbers, had filed out from a more distant breach, and, marching by lanes, vineyards, and passes known to themselves, had fallen upon the right flank of the Burgundian army, who, alarmed at their war-cries of *Vive la France!* and *Denis Montjoie!* which mingled with those of *Liege* and *Rouge Sanglier*, and at the idea, thus inspired, of treachery on the part of the French confederates, made a very desultory and imperfect resistance; while the Duke, foaming, and swearing, and cursing his liege Lord and all that belonged to him, called out to shoot with bow and gun on all that was French, whether black or white,—alluding to the sleeves with which Louis's soldiers had designated themselves.

The arrival of the King, attended only by Le Balafré and Quentin, and half-a-score of archers, restored confidence between France and Burgundy. D'Hymbercourt, Crèvecœur, and others of the Burgundian leaders, whose names were then the praise and dread of war, rushed devotedly into the conflict; and, while some commanders hastened to bring up more distant troops, to whom the panic had not extended, others threw themselves into the tumult, re-animated the instinct of discipline, and while the Duke toiled in the front, shouting, hacking, and hewing, like an ordinary man-at-arms, brought their men by degrees into array, and dismayed the assailants by the use of their artillery. The conduct of Louis, on the other hand, was that of a calm, collected, sagacious leader, who neither sought nor avoided danger, but showed so much self-possession and sagacity that the Burgundian leaders readily obeyed the orders which he issued.

The scene was now become in the utmost degree animated and horrible. On the left the suburb, after a fierce contest, had been set on fire, and a wide and dreadful conflagration did not prevent the burning ruins from being still disputed. On the centre, the French troops, though pressed by immense odds, kept up so close and constant a fire, that the little pleasure-house shone bright with the glancing flashes, as if surrounded with a martyr's crown of flames. On the left, the battle swayed backwards and forwards, with varied success, as fresh reinforcements poured out of the town, or were brought forward from the rear of the Burgundian host; and the strife continued with unremitting fury for three mortal hours, which at length brought

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the dawn, so much desired by the besiegers. The enemy, at this period, seemed to be slackening their efforts upon the right and in the centre, and several discharges of cannon were heard from the lust-haus.

"Go," said the King to Le Balafré and Quentin, the instant his ear had caught the sound; "they have got up the sakers and falconets—the pleasure-house is safe, blessed be the Holy Virgin!—Tell Dunois to move this way, but rather nearer the walls of Liege, with all our men-at-arms, excepting what he may leave for the defence of the house, and cut in between those thick-headed Liegeois on the right and the city, from which they are supplied with recruits."

The uncle and nephew galloped off to Dunois and Crawford, who, tired of their defensive war, joyfully obeyed the summons, and, filing out at the head of a gallant body of about two hundred French gentlemen, besides squires, and the greater part of the Archers and their followers, marched across the field, trampling down the wounded, until they gained the flank of the large body of Liegeois, by whom the right of the Burgundians had been so fiercely assailed. The increasing daylight discovered that the enemy were continuing to pour out from the city, either for the purpose of continuing the battle on that point, or of bringing safely off the forces who were already engaged.

"By Heaven!" said old Crawford to Dunois, "were I not certain it is *thou* that art riding by my side, I would say I saw thee among yonder banditti and burghers, marshalling and arraying them with thy mace—only, if yon be thou, thou art bigger than thou art wont to be. Art thou sure yonder armed leader is not thy wraith, thy doubleman, as these Flemings call it?"

"My wraith!" said Dunois; "I know not what you mean. But yonder is a caitiff with my bearings displayed on crest and shield, whom I will presently punish for his insolence."

"In the name of all that is noble, my lord, leave the vengeance to me!" said Quentin.

"To *thee*, indeed, young man!" said Dunois; "that is a modest request—No—these things brook no substitution."—Then turning on his saddle, he called out to those around him, "Gentlemen of France, form your line, level your lances! Let the rising sunbeams shine through the battalions of yonder

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swine of Liege and hogs of Ardennes, that masquerade in our ancient coats."

The men-at-arms answered with a loud shout of "A Dunois! a Dunois!—Long live the bold Bastard!—Orleans to the rescue!"—And, with their leader in the centre, they charged at full gallop. They encountered no timid enemy. The large body which they charged, consisted (excepting some mounted officers) entirely of infantry, who, setting the butt of their lances against their feet, the front rank kneeling, the second stooping, and those behind presenting their spears over their heads, offered such resistance to the rapid charge of the men-at-arms as the hedgehog presents to his enemy. Few were able to make way through that iron wall; but of those few was Dunois, who, giving spur to his horse, and making the noble animal leap more than twelve feet at a bound, fairly broke his way into the middle of the phalanx, and made toward the object of his animosity. What was his surprise to find Quentin still by his side, and fighting in the same front with himself—youth, desperate courage, and the determination to do or die, having still kept the youth abreast with the best knight in Europe; for such was Dunois reported, and truly reported, at the period.

Their spears were soon broken; but the lanzknechts were unable to withstand the blows of their long heavy swords; while the horses and riders, armed in complete steel, sustained little injury from their lances. Still Dunois and Durward were contending with rival efforts to burst forward to the spot where he who had usurped the armorial bearings of Dunois was doing the duty of a good and valiant leader, when Dunois, observing the boar's head and tusks—the usual bearing of William de la Marck—in another part of the conflict, called out to Quentin, "Thou art worthy to avenge the arms of Orleans! I leave thee the task.—Balafré, support your nephew; but let none dare to interfere with Dunois' boar-hunt!"

That Quentin Durward joyfully acquiesced in this division of labour cannot be doubted, and each pressed forward upon his separate object, followed, and defended from behind, by such men-at-arms as were able to keep up with them.

But at this moment the column which De la Marck had proposed to support, when his own course was arrested by the charge of Dunois, had lost all the advantages they had gained

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during the night; while the Burgundians, with returning day, had begun to show the qualities which belong to superior discipline. The great mass of Liegeois were compelled to retreat, and at length to fly; and, falling back on those who were engaged with the French men-at-arms, the whole became a confused tide of fighters, fliers, and pursuers, which rolled itself towards the city walls, and at last was poured into the ample and undefended breach through which the Liegeois had sallied.

Quentin made more than human exertions to overtake the special object of his pursuit, who was still in his sight, striving, by voice and example, to renew the battle, and bravely supported by a chosen party of lanzknechts. Le Balafré, and several of his comrades, attached themselves to Quentin, much marvelling at the extraordinary gallantry displayed by so young a soldier. On the very brink of the breach, De la Marck—for it was himself—succeeded in effecting a momentary stand, and repelling some of the most forward of the pursuers. He had a mace of iron in his hand, before which everything seemed to go down, and was so much covered with blood, that it was almost impossible to discern those bearings on his shield which had so much incensed Dunois.

Quentin now found little difficulty in singling him out; for the commanding situation of which he had possessed himself, and the use he made of his terrible mace, caused many of the assailants to seek safer points of attack than that where so desperate a defender presented himself. But Quentin, to whom the importance attached to victory over this formidable antagonist was better known, sprung from his horse at the bottom of the breach, and letting the noble animal, the gift of the Duke of Orleans, run loose through the tumult, ascended the ruins to measure swords with the Boar of Ardennes. The latter, as if he had seen his intention, turned towards Durward with mace uplifted; and they were on the point of encounter, when a dreadful shout of triumph, of tumult, and of despair, announced that the besiegers were entering the city at another point, and in the rear of those who defended the breach. Assembling around him, by voice and bugle, the desperate partners of his desperate fortune, De la Marck, at those appalling sounds, abandoned the breach, and endeavoured to effect his retreat towards a part of the city from which he might escape to the other side of the Maes. His immediate followers

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formed a deep body of well-disciplined men, who, never having given quarter, were resolved now not to ask it, and who, in that hour of despair, threw themselves into such firm order, that their front occupied the whole breadth of the street through which they slowly retired, making head from time to time, and checking the pursuers, many of whom began to seek a safer occupation, by breaking into the houses for plunder. It is therefore probable that De la Marck might have effected his escape, his disguise concealing him from those who promised themselves to win honour and grandeur upon his head, but for the stanch pursuit of Quentin, his uncle Le Balafré, and some of his comrades. At every pause which was made by the lanzknechts, a furious combat took place betwixt them and the Archers, and in every *mêlée* Quentin sought De la Marck; but the latter, whose present object was to retreat, seemed to evade the young Scot's purpose of bringing him to single combat. The confusion was general in every direction. The shrieks and cries of women, the yelling of the terrified inhabitants, now subjected to the extremity of military license, sounded horribly shrill amid the shouts of battle,—like the voice of misery and despair contending with that of fury and violence, which should be heard farthest and loudest.

It was just when De la Marck, retiring through this infernal scene, had passed the door of a small chapel of peculiar sanctity, that the shouts of "France! France!—Burgundy! Burgundy!" apprised him that a part of the besiegers were entering the farther end of the street, which was a narrow one, and that his retreat was cut off.—"Conrade," he said, "take all the men with you—Charge yonder fellows roundly, and break through if you can—with me it is over. I am man enough, now that I am brought to bay, to send some of these vagabond Scots to hell before me."

His lieutenant obeyed, and, with most of the few lanzknechts who remained alive, hurried to the farther end of the street, for the purpose of charging those Burgundians who were advancing, and so forcing their way, so as to escape. About six of De la Marck's best men remained to perish with their master, and fronted the Archers, who were not many more in number.—"Sanglier! Sanglier! Hola! gentlemen of Scotland," said the ruffian but undaunted chief, waving his mace, "who longs to gain a coronet,—who strikes at the Boar of

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Ardennes?—You, young man, have, methinks, a hankering; but you must win ere you wear it."

Quentin heard but imperfectly the words, which were partly lost in the hollow helmet; but the action could not be mistaken, and he had but time to bid his uncle and comrades, as they were gentlemen, to stand back, when De la Marck sprung upon him with a bound like a tiger, aiming at the same time a blow with his mace, so as to make his hand and foot keep time together, and giving his stroke full advantage of the descent of his leap; but, light of foot and quick of eye, Quentin leaped aside, and disappointed an aim which would have been fatal had it taken effect.

They then closed, like the wolf and the wolf-dog, their comrades on either side remaining inactive spectators, for Le Balafré roared out for fair play, adding, "that he would venture his nephew on him were he as wight as Wallace."

Neither was the experienced soldier's confidence unjustified; for, although the blows of the despairing robber fell like those of the hammer on the anvil, yet the quick motions, and dexterous swordmanship, of the young Archer, enabled him to escape, and to requite them with the point of his less noisy, though more fatal weapon; and that so often and so effectually, that the huge strength of his antagonist began to give way to fatigue, while the ground on which he stood became a puddle of blood. Yet, still unabated in courage and ire, the wild Boar of Ardennes fought on with as much mental energy as at first, and Quentin's victory seemed dubious and distant, when a female voice behind him called him by his name, ejaculating, "Help! help! for the sake of the blessed Virgin!"

He turned his head, and with a single glance beheld Gertrude Pavillon, her mantle stripped from her shoulders, dragged forcibly along by a French soldier; one of several, who, breaking into the chapel close by, had seized, as their prey, on the terrified females who had taken refuge there.

"Wait for me but one moment," exclaimed Quentin to De la Marck, and sprung to extricate his benefactress from a situation of which he conjectured all the dangers.

"I wait no man's pleasure," said De la Marck, flourishing his mace, and beginning to retreat—glad, no doubt, at being free of so formidable an assailant.

"You shall wait mine, though, by your leave," said Balafré;

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"I will not have my nephew baulked."—So saying, he instantly assaulted De la Marck with his two-handed sword.

Quentin found, in the meanwhile, that the rescue of Gertrude was a task more difficult than could be finished in one moment. Her captor, supported by his comrades, refused to relinquish his prize; and whilst Durward, aided by one or two of his countrymen, endeavoured to compel him to do so, the former beheld the chance which Fortune had so kindly afforded him for fortune and happiness, glide out of his reach; so that, when he stood at length in the street with the liberated Gertrude, there was no one near them. Totally forgetting the defenceless situation of his companion, he was about to spring away in pursuit of the Boar of Ardennes, as the greyhound tracks the deer, when, clinging to him in her despair, she exclaimed, "For the sake of your mother's honour, leave me not here!—As you are a gentleman, protect me to my father's house, which once sheltered you and the Lady Isabelle!—For her sake, leave me not!"

Her call was agonising, but it was irresistible; and bidding a mental adieu, with unutterable bitterness of feeling, to all the gay hopes which had stimulated his exertion, carried him through that bloody day, and which at one moment seemed to approach consummation, Quentin, like an unwilling spirit, who obeys a talisman which he cannot resist, protected Gertrude to Pavillon's house, and arrived in time to defend that and the Syndic himself against the fury of the licentious soldiery.

Meantime, the King and the Duke of Burgundy entered the city on horseback, and through one of the breaches. They were both in complete armour, but the latter, covered with blood from the plume to the spur, drove his steed furiously up the breach, which Louis surmounted with the stately pace of one who leads a procession. They despatched orders to stop the sack of the city, which had already commenced, and to assemble their scattered troops. The Princes themselves proceeded towards the great church, both for the protection of many of the distinguished inhabitants, who had taken refuge there, and in order to hold a sort of military council after they had heard High Mass.

Busied, like other officers of his rank, in collecting those under his command, Lord Crawford, at the turning of one of the streets which leads to the Maes, met Le Balafré saunterring

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composedly towards the river, holding in his hand, by the gory locks, a human head, with as much indifference as a fowler carries a game-pouch.

"How now, Ludovic!" said his commander; "what are ye doing with that carrion?"

"It is all that is left of a bit of work which my nephew shaped out, and nearly finished, and I put the last hand to," said Le Balafré—"a good fellow that I despatched yonder, and who prayed me to throw his head into the Maes—Men have queer fancies when old Small-Back* is griping them; but Small-Back must lead down the dance with us all in our time."

"And you are going to throw that head into the Maes?" said Crawford, looking more attentively on the ghastly memorial of mortality.

"Ay, truly am I," said Ludovic Lesly. "If you refuse a dying man his boon, you are likely to be haunted by his ghost, and I love to sleep sound at nights."

"You must take your chance of the ghaist, man," said Crawford; "for, by my soul, there is more lies on that dead pow than you think for. Come along with me—not a word more—Come along with me."

"Nay, for that matter," said Le Balafré, "I made him no promise; for, in truth, I had off his head before the tongue had well done wagging; and as I feared him not living, by Saint Martin of Tours, I fear him as little when he is dead. Besides, my little gossip, the merry Friar of Saint Martin's, will lend me a pot of holy water."

When High Mass had been said at the Cathedral Church of Liege, and the terrified town was restored to some moderate degree of order, Louis and Charles, with their peers around, proceeded to hear the claims of those who had any to make for services performed during the battle. Those which respected the County of Croye and its fair mistress were first received, and to the disappointment of sundry claimants, who had thought themselves sure of the rich prize, there seemed doubt and mystery to involve their several pretensions. Crèvecœur showed a boar's hide, such as De la Marck usually wore; Dunois produced a cloven shield, with his armorial bearings; and there were others, who claimed the merit of having despatched the mur-

* A cant expression in Scotland for death, usually delineated as a skeleton.

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derer of the Bishop, producing similar tokens—the rich reward fixed on De la Marck's head having brought death to all who were armed in his resemblance.

There was much noise and contest among the competitors, and Charles, internally regretting the rash promise which had placed the hand and wealth of his fair vassal on such a hazard, was in hopes he might find means of evading all these conflicting claims, when Crawford pressed forward into the circle, dragging Le Balafré after him, who, awkward and bashful, followed like an unwilling mastiff towed in a leash, as his leader exclaimed —"Away with your hoofs and hides, and painted iron!—No one, save he who slew the Boar, can show the tusks!"

So saying, he flung on the floor the bloody head, easily known as that of De la Marck, by the singular conformation of the jaws, which in reality had a certain resemblance to those of the animal whose name he bore, and which was instantly recognised by all who had seen him.*

"Crawford," said Louis, while Charles sat silent, in gloomy and displeased surprise, "I trust it is one of my faithful Scots who has won this prize?"

"It is Ludovic Lesly, Sire, whom we call Le Balafré," replied the old soldier.

"But is he noble?" said the Duke; "is he of gentle blood?—otherwise our promise is void."

"He is a cross ungainly piece of wood enough," said Crawford, looking at the tall, awkward, embarrassed figure of the Archer; "but I will warrant him a branch of the tree of Rothes for all that—and they have been as noble as any house in France or Burgundy, ever since it is told of their founder, that,

> 'Between the less-lee† and the mair,
> He slew the Knight, and left him there.'"

"There is then no help for it," said the Duke, "and the fairest and richest heiress in Burgundy must be the wife of a rude mercenary soldier like this, or die secluded in a convent—and she the only child of our faithful Reginald de Croye!—I have been too rash."

* Note V. Count de La Marck.

† An old rhyme, by which the Leslies vindicate their descent from an ancient knight who is said to have slain a gigantic Hungarian champion, and to have formed a proper name for himself by a play of words upon the place where he fought his adversary.

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And a cloud settled on his brow, to the surprise of his peers, who seldom saw him evince the slightest token of regret for the necessary consequences of an adopted resolution.

"Hold but an instant," said the Lord Crawford; "it may be better than your Grace conjectures. Hear but what this cavalier has to say.—Speak out, man, and a murrain to thee," he added, apart to Le Balafré.

But that blunt soldier, though he could make a shift to express himself intelligibly enough to King Louis, to whose familiarity he was habituated, yet found himself incapable of enunciating his resolution before so splendid an assembly as that before which he then stood; and after having turned his shoulder to the Princes, and preluded with a hoarse chuckling laugh, and two or three tremendous contortions of countenance, he was only able to pronounce the words, "Saunders Souplejaw"—and then stuck fast.

"May it please your Majesty and your Grace," said Crawford, "I must speak for my countryman and old comrade. You shall understand that he has had it prophesied to him by a Seer in his own land, that the fortune of his house is to be made by marriage; but as he is, like myself, something the worse for the wear—loves the wine-house better than a lady's summer-parlour, and, in short, having some barrack tastes and likings, which would make greatness in his own person rather an encumbrance to him, he hath acted by my advice, and resigns the pretensions acquired by the fate of slaying William de la Marck, to him by whom the Wild Boar was actually brought to bay, who is his maternal nephew."

"I will vouch for that youth's services and prudence," said King Louis, overjoyed to see that fate had thrown so gallant a prize to one over whom he had some influence. "Without his prudence and vigilance we had been ruined—It was he who made us aware of the night-sally."

"I then," said Charles, "owe him some reparation for doubting his veracity."

"And I can attest his gallantry as a man-at-arms," said Dunois.

"But," interrupted Crèvecœur, "though the uncle be a Scottish *gentilldtre*, that makes not the nephew necessarily so."

"He is of the House of Durward," said Crawford; "descended from that Allan Durward, who was High Steward of Scotland."

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"Nay, if it be young Durward," said Crèvecœur, "I say no more.—Fortune has declared herself on his side too plainly, for me to struggle farther with her humorsome ladyship;—but it is strange, from lord to horseboy, how wonderfully these Scots stick by each other."

"Highlanders shoulder to shoulder," answered Lord Crawford, laughing at the mortification of the proud Burgundian.

"We have yet to inquire," said Charles, thoughtfully, "what the fair lady's sentiments may be towards this fortunate adventurer."

"By the mass!" said Crèvecœur, "I have but too much reason to believe your Grace will find her more amenable to authority than on former occasions.—But why should I grudge this youth his preferment? since, after all, it is sense, firmness, and gallantry, which have put him in possession of WEALTH, RANK, and BEAUTY!"

I HAD already sent these sheets to the press, concluding, as I thought, with a moral of excellent tendency for the encouragement of all fair-haired, blue-eyed, long-legged, stout-hearted emigrants from my native country, who might be willing in stirring times to take up the gallant profession of Cavalieros of Fortune. But a friendly monitor, one of those who like the lump of sugar which is found at the bottom of a tea-cup, as well as the flavour of the souchong itself, has entered a bitter remonstrance, and insists that I should give a precise and particular account of the espousals of the young heir of Glen-houlakin and the lovely Flemish Countess, and tell what tournaments were held, and how many lances were broken, upon so interesting an occasion; nor withhold from the curious reader the number of sturdy boys, who inherited the valour of Quentin Durward, and of bright damsels, in whom were renewed the charms of Isabelle de Croye. I replied in course of post, that times were changed, and public weddings were entirely out of fashion. In days, traces of which I myself can remember, not only were the "fifteen friends" of the happy pair invited to witness their union, but the bridal minstrelsy still continued, as in the "Ancient Mariner," to "nod their heads" till morning shone on them. The sack-posset was eaten in the nuptial chamber—the stocking was thrown—and the bride's garter was struggled for in presence of the happy

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couple whom Hymen had made one flesh. The authors of the period were laudably accurate in following its fashions. They spared you not a blush of the bride, not a rapturous glance of the bridegroom, not a diamond in her hair, not a button on his embroidered waistcoat; until at length, with Astræa, "they fairly put their characters to bed." But how little does this agree with the modest privacy which induces our modern brides —sweet bashful darlings!—to steal from pomp and plate, and admiration and flattery, and, like honest Shenstone,

"Seek for freedom at an inn!"

To these, unquestionably, an exposure of the circumstances of publicity with which a bridal in the fifteenth century was always celebrated, must appear in the highest degree disgusting. Isabelle de Croye would be ranked in their estimation far below the maid who milks, and does the meanest chares; for even she, were it in the church-porch, would reject the hand of her journeyman shoemaker, should he propose "*faire des noces*," as it is called on Parisian signs, instead of going down on the top of the long coach to spend the honeymoon *incognito* at Deptford or Greenwich. I will not, therefore, tell more of this matter, but will steal away from the wedding, as Ariosto from that of Angelica, leaving it to whom it may please to add farther particulars, after the fashion of their own imagination.

"Some better bard shall sing, in feudal state
How Braquemont's Castle op'd its Gothic gate,
When on the wand'ring Scot, its lovely heir
Bestow'd her beauty and an earldom fair." *

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* "E come a ritornare in sua contrada
Trovasse e buon naviglio e miglior tempo
E dell' India a Medor desse lo scettro
Forse altri cantera con miglior plettro."
ORLANDO FURIOSO, *Canto XXX. Stanza* 16.

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NOTES TO QUENTIN DURWARD.

NOTE A, p. 9.—RECEPTION OF "QUENTIN DURWARD" ABROAD.

["The sensation which this novel, on its first appearance, created in Paris, was extremely similar to that which attended the original Waverley in Edinburgh, and Ivanhoe afterwards in London. For the first time Scott had ventured on foreign ground, and the French public, long wearied of the pompous tragedians and feeble romancers, who had alone striven to bring out the ancient history and manners of their country in popular forms, were seized with a fever of delight when Louis XI. and Charles the Bold started into life again at the beck of the Northern Magician. Germany had been fully awake to his merits years before, but the public there also felt their sympathies appealed to with hitherto unmatched strength and effect. The infection of admiration ran far and wide on the Continent, and soon re-acted most potently at home."*—J. G. LOCKHART.]

NOTE B, p. 47.—SAINT HUBERT.

Every vocation had, in the middle ages, its protecting saint. The chase, with its fortunes and its hazards, the business of so many, and the amusement of all, was placed under the direction of Saint Hubert.

This silvan saint was the son of Bertrand, Duke of Acquitaine, and, while in the secular state, was a courtier of King Pepin. He was passionately fond of the chase, and used to neglect attendance on divine worship for this amusement. While he was once engaged in this pastime, a stag appeared before him, having a crucifix bound betwixt his horns, and he heard a voice which menaced him with eternal punishment if he did not repent of his sins. He retired from the world and took orders, his wife having also retreated into the cloister. Hubert afterwards became Bishop of Maestrecht and Liege; and from his zeal in destroying remnants of idolatry, is called the Apostle of Ardennes and of Brabant. Those who were descended of his race were supposed to possess the power of curing persons bitten by mad dogs.

* [As showing the interest taken in England, it may be mentioned that shortly after the appearance of Quentin, a very curious little work was published anonymously, called "Historical Illustrations of Quentin Durward, selected from the Memoirs of Philip des Comines and other Authors," London, 1823, 8vo, in which the author endeavours to trace the sources from which Scott derived his incidents and characters.]

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Note C, p. 60.—Duke of Gueldres.

This was Adolphus, son of Arnold and of Catherine de Bourbon. The present story has little to do with him, though one of the most atrocious characters of his time. He made war against his father; in which unnatural strife he made the old man prisoner, and used him with the most brutal violence, proceeding, it is said, even to the length of striking him with his hand. Arnold, in resentment of this usage, disinherited the unprincipled wretch, and sold to Charles of Burgundy whatever rights he had over the duchy of Gueldres and earldom of Zutphen. Mary of Burgundy, daughter of Charles, restored these possessions to the unnatural Adolphus, who was slain in 1477.

Note D, p. 101.—Gipsies or Bohemians.

In a former volume of this edition of the Waverley Novels (Guy Mannering), the reader will find some remarks on the gipsies as they are found in Scotland. But it is well known that this extraordinary variety of the human race exists in nearly the same primitive state, speaking the same language, in almost all the kingdoms of Europe, and conforming in certain respects to the manners of the people around them, but yet remaining separated from them by certain material distinctions, in which they correspond with each other, and thus maintain their pretensions to be considered as a distinct race. Their first appearance in Europe took place in the beginning of the fifteenth century, when various bands of this singular people appeared in the different countries of Europe. They claimed an Egyptian descent, and their features attested that they were of Eastern origin. The account given by these singular people was, that it was appointed to them, as a penance, to travel for a certain number of years. This apology was probably selected as being most congenial to the superstitions of the countries which they visited. Their appearance, however, and manners, strongly contradicted the allegation that they travelled from any religious motive.

Their dress and accoutrements were at once showy and squalid; those who acted as captains and leaders of any horde, and such always appeared as their commanders, were arrayed in dresses of the most showy colours, such as scarlet or light green; were well mounted; assumed the title of dukes and counts, and affected considerable consequence. The rest of the tribe were most miserable in their diet and apparel, fed without hesitation on animals which had died of disease, and were clad in filthy and scanty rags, which hardly sufficed for the ordinary purposes of common decency. Their complexion was positively Eastern, approaching to that of the Hindoos.

Their manners were as depraved as their appearance was poor and beggarly. The men were in general thieves, and the women of the most abandoned character. The few arts which they studied with success, were of a slight and idle, though ingenious description. They practised working in iron, but never upon any great scale. Many were good sportsmen, good musicians, and masters, in a word, of all those trivial arts, the practice of

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which is little better than mere idleness. But their ingenuity never ascended into industry. Two or three other peculiarities seem to have distinguished them in all countries. Their pretensions to read fortunes, by palmistry and by astrology, acquired them sometimes respect, but oftener drew them under suspicion as sorcerers; and lastly, the universal accusation that they augmented their horde by stealing children, subjected them to doubt and execration. From this it happened, that the pretension set up by these wanderers, of being pilgrims in the act of penance, although it was at first admitted, and in many instances obtained them protection from the governments of the countries through which they travelled, was afterwards totally disbelieved, and they were considered as incorrigible rogues and vagrants; they incurred almost everywhere sentence of banishment, and where suffered to remain, were rather objects of persecution than of protection from the law.

There is a curious and accurate account of their arrival in France in the Journal of a Doctor of Theology, which is preserved and published by the learned Pasquier. The following is an extract:—"On August 27th, 1427, came to Paris twelve penitents, *Penanciers* (penance-doers), as they called themselves, viz., a duke, an earl, and ten men, all on horseback, and calling themselves good Christians. They were of Lower Egypt, and gave out that, not long before, the Christians had subdued their country, and obliged them to embrace Christianity on pain of being put to death. Those who were baptized were great lords in their own country, and had a king and queen there. Soon after their conversion, the Saracens overran the country, and obliged them to renounce Christianity. When the Emperor of Germany, the King of Poland, and other Christian Princes heard of this, they fell upon them, and obliged the whole of them, both great and small, to quit the country, and go to the Pope at Rome, who enjoined them seven years' penance to wander over the world without lying in a bed.

"They had been wandering five years when they came to Paris first; the principal people, and soon after the commonalty, about 100 or 120, reduced (according to their own account) from 1000 or 1200, when they went from home, the rest being dead, with their king and queen. They were lodged by the police at some distance from the city, at Chapel Saint Denis.

"Nearly all of them had their ears bored, and wore two silver rings in each, which they said were esteemed ornaments in their country. The men were black, their hair curled; the women remarkably black, their only clothes a large old duffle garment tied over the shoulders with a cloth or cord, and under it a miserable rocket. In short, they were the most poor miserable creatures that had ever been seen in France; and, notwithstanding their poverty, there were among them women, who, by looking into people's hands, told their fortunes, and, what was worse, they picked people's pockets of their money, and got it into their own, by telling these things through airy magic, et cætera."

Notwithstanding the ingenious account of themselves rendered by these gipsies, the Bishop of Paris ordered a friar, called Le Petit Jacobin, to preach a sermon, excommunicating all the men and women who had had recourse to these Bohemians on the subject of the future, and shown their hands for that purpose. They departed from Paris for Pontoise in the month of September.

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Pasquier remarks upon this singular journal, that however the story of a penance savours of a trick, these people wandered up and down France, under the eye, and with the knowledge, of the magistrates, for more than a hundred years; and it was not till 1561, that a sentence of banishment was passed against them in that kingdom.

The arrival of the Egyptians (as these singular people were called) in various parts of Europe, corresponds with the period in which Timur or Tamerlane invaded Hindostan, affording its natives the choice between the Koran and death. There can be little doubt that these wanderers consisted originally of the Hindostanee tribes, who, displaced, and flying from the sabres of the Mahommedans, undertook this species of wandering life, without well knowing whither they were going. It is natural to suppose the band, as it now exists, is much mingled with Europeans; but most of these have been brought up from childhood among them, and learned all their practices.

It is strong evidence of this, that when they are in closest contact with the ordinary peasants around them, they still keep their language a mystery. There is little doubt, however, that it is a dialect of the Hindostanee, from the specimens produced by Grellman, Hoyland, and others, who have written on the subject. But the Author has, besides their authority, personal occasion to know that an individual, out of mere curiosity, and availing himself with patience and assiduity of such opportunites as offered, has made himself capable of conversing with any gipsy whom he meets, or can, like the royal Hal, drink with any tinker in his own language. The astonishment excited among these vagrants on finding a stranger participant of their mystery, occasions very ludicrous scenes. It is to be hoped this gentleman will publish the knowledge he possesses on so singular a topic.

There are prudential reasons for postponing this disclosure at present; for although much more reconciled to society since they have been less the objects of legal persecution, the gipsies are still a ferocious and vindictive people.

But notwithstanding this is certainly the case, I cannot but add, from my own observation of nearly fifty years, that the manners of these vagrant tribes are much ameliorated;—that I have known individuals amongst them who have united themselves to civilised society, and maintain respectable characters, and that a great alteration has been wrought in their cleanliness and general mode of life.

Note E, p. 125.—Card-playing.

Dr. Dryasdust here remarks, that cards, said to have been invented in a preceding reign, for the amusement of Charles V. during the intervals of his mental disorder, seem speedily to have become common among the courtiers, since they already furnished Louis XI. with a metaphor. The same proverb was quoted by Durandarte, in the enchanted cave of Montesinos. The alleged origin of the invention of cards, produced one of the shrewdest replies I have ever heard given in evidence. It was made by the late Dr. Gregory of Edinburgh to a counsel of great eminence at the Scottish Bar. The Doctor's testimony went to prove the insanity of the party whose mental capacity was the point at issue. On a cross-interroga-

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tion, he admitted that the person in question played admirably at whist. "And do you seriously say, doctor," said the learned counsel, "that a person having a superior capacity for a game so difficult, and which requires in a pre-eminent degree, memory, judgment, and combination, can be at the same time deranged in his understanding?"—"I am no card-player," said the doctor, with great address, "but I have read in history that cards were invented for the amusement of an insane king." The consequences of this reply were decisive.

Note F, p. 136.—Balue's Horsemanship.

A friendly, though unknown correspondent, has pointed out to me that I have been mistaken in alleging that the Cardinal was a bad rider. If so, I owe his memory an apology; for there are few men who, until my latter days, have loved that exercise better than myself. But the Cardinal may have been an indifferent horseman, though he wished to be looked upon as equal to the dangers of the chase. He was a man of assumption and ostentation, as he showed at the siege of Paris in 1465, where, contrary to the custom and usage of war, he mounted guard during the night with an unusual sound of clarions, trumpets, and other instruments. In imputing to the Cardinal a want of skill in horsemanship, I recollected his adventure in Paris when attacked by assassins, on which occasion his mule, being scared by the crowd, ran away with the rider, and taking its course to a monastery, to the abbot of which he formerly belonged, was the means of saving his master's life.—*See* Jean de Troyes' *Chronicle.*

Note G, p. 152.—Louis's Brother-in-Law.

[The Princess Margaret, eldest daughter of King James the First, when only eleven years of age, was married to Louis, Dauphin of France, at the age of twelve, on the 6th of July 1436. It proved an unfortunate marriage, and the accomplished princess (her husband not succeeding till 1461 to the throne of France) died without issue, August 1445, in her twenty-third year, it is said of a broken heart. The allusion in the text is to the fate of James, Earl of Douglas, who, upon the faith of a safe-conduct, after several acts of rebellion, visited James the Second in the Castle of Stirling. The king, irritated by some personal affront, but quite unpremeditated, drew his dagger and stabbed Douglas, who received his mortal wound from Sir Patrick Gray, one of the king's attendants (who had previously vowed revenge against the proud Earl), on the 22d February 1452.]

Note H, p. 190.—Galeotti.

Martius Galeotti was a native of Narni, in Umbria. He was secretary to Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, and tutor to his son, John Corvinus. While at his court, he composed a work, *De jocose dictis et factis Regis Matthiæ Corvini.* He left Hungary in 1477, and was made prisoner at Venice on a charge of having propagated heterodox opinions in a treatise entitled, *De homine interiore et corpore ejus.* He was obliged to recant

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some of these doctrines, and might have suffered seriously but for the protection of Sextus IV., then Pope, who had been one of his scholars. He went to France, attached himself to Louis XI., and died in his service.

Note I, p. 212.—Religion of the Bohemians.

It was a remarkable feature of the character of these wanderers that they did not, like the Jews, whom they otherwise resembled in some particulars, possess or profess any particular religion, whether in form or principle. They readily conformed, as far as might be required, with the religion of any country in which they happened to sojourn, nor did they ever practise it more than was demanded of them. It is certain that in India they embraced neither the tenets of the religion of Bramah nor of Mahomet. They have hence been considered as belonging to the outcast East Indian tribes of Nuts or Parias. Their want of religion is supplied by a good deal of superstition. Such of their ritual as can be discovered, for example that belonging to marriage, is savage in the extreme, and represents the customs of the Hottentots more than of any civilised people. They adopt various observances, picked up from the religion of the country in which they live. It is, or rather was, the custom of the tribes on the Borders of England and Scotland, to attribute success to those journeys which are commenced by passing through the parish church; and they usually try to obtain permission from the beadle to do so when the church is empty, for the performance of divine service is not considered as essential to the omen. They are, therefore, totally devoid of any effectual sense of religion; and the higher or more instructed class may be considered as acknowledging no deity save those of Epicurus, and such is described as being the faith, or no faith, of Hayraddin Maugrabin.

I may here take notice, that nothing is more disagreeable to this indolent and voluptuous people than being forced to follow any regular profession. When Paris was garrisoned by the allied troops in the year 1815, the Author was walking with a British officer near a post held by the Prussian troops. He happened at the time to smoke a cigar, and was about, while passing the sentinel, to take it out of his mouth, in compliance with a general regulation to that effect, when, greatly to the astonishment of the passengers, the soldier addressed them in these words: "*Rauchen sie immerfort, verdamt sey der Preussische dienst;*" that is, "Smoke away; may the Prussian service be d—d!" Upon looking closer at the man, he seemed plainly to be a *Zigeuner*, or gipsy, who took this method of expressing his detestation of the duty imposed on him. When the risk he ran by doing so is considered, it will be found to argue a deep degree of dislike which could make him commit himself so unwarily. If he had been overheard by a sergeant or corporal, the *prügel* would have been the slightest instrument of punishment employed.

Note J, p. 287.—Murder of the Bishop of Liege.

In assigning the present date to the murder of the Bishop of Liege, Louis de Bourbon, history has been violated. It is true that the Bishop was made prisoner by the insurgents of that city. It is also true that the report of

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the insurrection came to Charles with a rumour that the Bishop was slain, which excited his indignation against Louis, who was then in his power. But these things happened in 1468, and the Bishop's murder did not take place till 1482. In the months of August and September of that year, William de la Marck, called the Wild Boar of Ardennes, entered into a conspiracy with the discontented citizens of Liege against their Bishop, Louis of Bourbon, being aided with considerable sums of money by the King of France. By this means, and the assistance of many murderers and banditti, who thronged to him as to a leader befitting them, De la Marck assembled a body of troops, whom he dressed in scarlet as a uniform, with a boar's head on the left sleeve. With this little army he approached the city of Liege. Upon this, the citizens who were engaged in the conspiracy came to their Bishop, and offering to stand by him to the death, exhorted him to march out against these robbers. The Bishop, therefore, put himself at the head of a few troops of his own, trusting to the assistance of the people of Liege. But so soon as they came in sight of the enemy the citizens, as before agreed, fled from the Bishop's banner, and he was left with his own handful of adherents. At this moment De la Marck charged at the head of his banditti with the expected success. The Bishop was brought before the profligate knight, who first cut him over the face, then murdered him with his own hand, and caused his body to be exposed naked in the great square of Liege before Saint Lambert's Cathedral.

Such is the actual narrative of a tragedy which struck with horror the people of the time. The murder of the Bishop has been fifteen years antedated in the text, for reasons which the reader of romances will easily appreciate.

Note K, p. 306.—Schwarz-reiters.

Fynes Morrison describes this species of soldiery as follows:—"He that at this day looks upon their *Schwarz-reiters* (that is, black horsemen) must confess that, to make their horses and boots shine, they make themselves as black as colliers. These horsemen wear black clothes, and poor though they be, spend no small time in brushing them. The most of them have black horses, which, while they painfully dress, and (as I have said) delight to have their boots and shoes shine with blacking stuff, their hands and faces become black, and thereof they have their foresaid name. Yet I have heard Germans say, that they do thus make themselves black to seem more terrible to their enemies."—Fynes Morrison's *Itinerary*. Edition 1617, Part III. p. 165.

Note L, p. 322.—Philip des Comines.

Philip des Comines was described in the former editions of this work as a little man, fitted rather for counsel than action. This was a description made at a venture, to vary the military portraits with which the age and work abound. Sleidan the historian, upon the authority of Matthieu d'Arvas, who knew Philip des Comines, and had served in his household, says he was a man of tall stature, and a noble presence. The learned Monsieur Petitot, editor of the edition of Memoirs relative to the History of France, a work of great value, intimates that Philip des Comines made a figure at the games of chivalry and pageants exhibited on the wedding of Charles of

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Burgundy with Margaret of England in 1468.—See the Chronicle of Jean de Troyes, in Petitot's edition of the *Mémoires Relatifs à l'Histoire de France*, vol. xiii. p. 375, Note. I have looked into Oliver de la Marcke, who, in lib. ii., chapter iv., of his Memoirs, gives an ample account of these "fierce vanities," containing as many miscellaneous articles as the reticule of the old merchant of Peter Schlemil, who bought shadows, and carried with him in his bag whatever any one could wish or demand in return. There are in that splendid description, knights, dames, pages, and archers, good store besides of castles, fiery dragons, and dromedaries; there are leopards riding upon lions; there are rocks, orchards, fountains, spears broken and whole, and the twelve labours of Hercules. In such a brilliant medley I had some trouble in finding Philip des Comines. He is the first named, however, of a gallant band of assailants, knights and noblemen, to the number of twenty, who, with the Prince of Orange as their leader, encountered, in a general tourney, with a party of the same number under the profligate Adolf of Cleves, who acted as challenger, by the romantic title of *Arbre d'or*. The encounter, though with arms of courtesy, was very fierce, and separated by main force, not without difficulty. Philip des Comines has, therefore, a title to be accounted *tam Marte, quam Mercurio*, though, when we consider the obscurity which has settled on the rest of this *troupe dorée*, we are at no loss to estimate the most valuable of his qualifications.

Note M, p. 324.—Meeting of Louis and Charles.

After the battle of Montl'hery, in 1465, Charles, then Comte de Charolais, had an interview with Louis under the walls of Paris, each at the head of a small party. The two princes dismounted, and walked together so deeply engaged in discussing the business of their meeting, that Charles forgot the peculiarity of his situation; and when Louis turned back towards the town of Paris, from which he came, the Count of Charolais kept him company so far as to pass the line of outworks with which Paris was surrounded, and enter a field-work which communicated with the town by a trench. At this period he had only five or six persons in company with him. His escort caught an alarm for his safety, and his principal followers rode forward from where he had left them, remembering that his grandfather had been assassinated at Montereau in a similar parley, on 10th September 1419. To their great joy the Count returned uninjured, accompanied with a guard belonging to Louis. The Burgundians taxed him with rashness in no measured terms. "Say no more of it," said Charles; "I acknowledge the extent of my folly, but I was not aware what I was doing till I entered the redoubt."—*Mémoires de* Philippe des Comines, chap. xiii.

Louis was much praised for his good faith on this occasion; and it was natural that the Duke should call it to recollection when his enemy so unexpectedly put himself in his power by his visit to Peronne.

Note N, p. 331.—Castle of Peronne.

The arrival of three brothers, Princes of the House of Savoy, of Monseigneur de Lau, whom the King had long detained in prison, of Sire Poncet

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de Rivière, and the Seigneur d'Urfé, who, by the way, as a romance-writer of a peculiar turn, might have been happily enough introduced into the present work, but the fate of the Euphuist was a warning to the Author. All of these nobles bearing the emblem of Burgundy, the cross, namely, of Saint Andrew, inspired Louis with so much suspicion, that he very impolitically demanded to be lodged in the old Castle of Peronne, and thus rendered himself an absolute captive. See COMINES' *Memoirs for the year* 1468.

NOTE O, p. 357.—LIEGE RIOTERS.

The historical facts attending this celebrated interview are expounded and enlarged upon in Chapter Twenty-Seventh. Agents sent by Louis had tempted the people of Liege to rebel against their superior, Duke Charles, and persecute and murder their Bishop. But Louis was not prepared for their acting with such promptitude. They flew to arms with the temerity of a fickle rabble, took the Bishop prisoner, menaced and insulted him, and tore to pieces one or two of his canons. This news was sent to the Duke of Burgundy at the moment when Louis had so unguardedly placed himself in his power; and the consequence was, that Charles placed guards on the Castle of Peronne, and, deeply resenting the treachery of the King of France in exciting sedition in his dominions while he pretended the most intimate friendship, he deliberated whether he should not put Louis to death.

Three days Louis was detained in this very precarious situation; and it was only his profuse liberality amongst Charles's favourites and courtiers which finally ensured him from death or deposition. Comines, who was the Duke of Burgundy's chamberlain at the time, and slept in his apartment, says, Charles neither undressed nor slept, but flung himself from time to time on the bed, and at other times wildly traversed the apartment. It was long before his violent temper became in any degree tractable. At length he only agreed to give Louis his liberty on condition of his accompanying him in person against, and employing his troops in subduing, the mutineers whom his intrigues had instigated to arms.

This was a bitter and degrading alternative. But Louis, seeing no other mode of compounding for the effects of his rashness, not only submitted to this discreditable condition, but swore to it upon a crucifix said to have belonged to Charlemagne. These particulars are from Comines. There is a succinct epitome of them in Sir Nathaniel Wraxall's *History of France*, vol. i.

NOTE P, p. 364.—BALUE.

Louis kept his promise of vengeance against Cardinal La Balue, whom he always blamed as having betrayed him to Burgundy. After he had returned to his own kingdom, he caused his late favourite to be immured in one of the iron cages at Loches. These were constructed with horrible ingenuity, so that a person of ordinary size could neither stand up at his full height nor lie lengthwise in them. Some ascribe this horrid device to Balue himself. At any rate, he was confined in one of these dens for eleven years, nor did Louis permit him to be liberated till his last illness.

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Note Q, p. 366.—Louis's Confession.

While I perused these passages in the old manuscript chronicle, I could not help feeling astonished that an intellect acute as that of Louis XI. certainly was, could so delude itself by a sort of superstition of which one would think the stupidest savages incapable; but the terms of the King's prayer on a similar occasion, as preserved by Brantome, are of a tenor fully as extraordinary. It is that which, being overheard by a fool or jester, was by him made public, and let in light on an act of fratricide which might never have been suspected. The way in which the story is narrated by the corrupted courtier, who could jest with all that is criminal as well as with all that is profligate, is worthy the reader's notice; for such actions are seldom done where there are not men with hearts of the nether millstone, capable and willing to make them matters of laughter.

"Among the numerous good tricks of dissimulation, feints and finesses of gallantry, which the good King (Louis XI.) did in his time, he put to death his brother, the Duke de Guyenne, at the moment when the Duke least thought of such a thing, and while the King was making the greatest show of love to him during his life, and of affection for him at his death, managing the whole concern with so much art, that it would never have been known had not the King taken into his own service a fool who had belonged to his deceased brother. But it chanced that Louis, being engaged in his devout prayers and orisons at the high altar of our Lady of Clery, whom he called his good patroness, and no person nigh except this fool, who, without his knowledge, was within earshot, he thus gave vent to his pious homilies:—

"'Ah, my good lady, my gentle mistress, my only friend, in whom alone I have resource, I pray you to supplicate God in my behalf, and to be my advocate with him that he may pardon me the death of my brother, whom I caused to be poisoned by that wicked Abbot of Saint John. I confess my guilt to thee as to my good patroness and mistress. But then what could I do? he was perpetually causing disorder in my kingdom. Cause me then to be pardoned, my good Lady, and I know what a reward I will give thee.'"

This singular confession did not escape the jester, who upbraided the King with the fratricide in the face of the whole company at dinner, which Louis was fain to let pass without observation, in case of increasing the slander.

Note R, p. 378.—Martius Galeotti.

The death of Martius Galeotti was in some degree connected with Louis XI. The astrologer was at Lyons, and hearing that the King was approaching the city, got on horseback in order to meet him. As he threw himself hastily from his horse to pay his respects to the King, he fell with a violence which, joined to his extreme corpulence, was the cause of his death in 1478.

But the acute and ready-witted expedient to escape instant death had no reference to the history of this philosopher. The same, or nearly the same, story is told of Tiberius, who demanded of a soothsayer, Thrasullus, if he knew the day of his own death, and received for answer, it would take place just three days before that of the Emperor. On this reply, instead

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of being thrown over the rocks into the sea, as had been the tyrant's first intention, he was taken great care of for the rest of his life.—*Taciti Annal.* lib. vi. cap. 22.

The circumstances in which Louis XI. received a similar reply from an astrologer are as follows:—The soothsayer in question had presaged that a female favourite, to whom the King was very much attached, should die in a week. As he proved a true prophet, the King was as much incensed as if the astrologer could have prevented the evil he predicted. He sent for the philosopher, and had a party stationed to assassinate him as he retired from the royal presence. Being asked by the King concerning his own fortunes, he confessed that he perceived signs of some imminent danger. Being farther questioned concerning the day of his own death, he was shrewd enough to answer with composure, that it would be exactly three days before that of his Majesty. There was, of course, care taken that he should escape his destined fate; and he was ever after much protected by the King, as a man of real science, and intimately connected with the royal destinies.

Although almost all the historians of Louis represent him as a dupe to the common but splendid imposture of judicial astrology, yet his credulity could not be deep-rooted, if the following anecdote, reported by Bayle, be correct:—

Upon one occasion, Louis intending to hunt, and doubtful of the weather, inquired of an astrologer near his person whether it would be fair. The sage, having recourse to his astrolabe, answered with confidence in the affirmative. At the entrance of the forest the royal cortège was met by a charcoalman, who expressed to some menials of the train his surprise that the King should have thought of hunting in a day which threatened tempest. The collier's prediction proved true. The King and his court were driven from their sport well drenched; and Louis, having heard what the collier had said, ordered the man before him. "How were you more accurate in foretelling the weather, my friend," said he, "than this learned man?"—"I am an ignorant man, Sire," answered the collier, "was never at school, and cannot read or write. But I have an astrologer of my own, who shall foretell weather with any of them. It is, with reverence, the ass who carries my charcoal, who always, when bad weather is approaching, points forward his ears, walks more slowly than usual, and tries to rub himself against walls, and it was from these signs that I foretold yesterday's storm." The King burst into a fit of laughing, dismissed the astrological biped, and assigned the collier a small pension to maintain the quadruped, swearing he would never in future trust to any other astrologer than the charcoalman's ass.

But if there is any truth in this story, the credulity of Louis was not of a nature to be removed by the failure there mentioned. He is said to have believed in the prediction of Angelo Cattho, his physician, and the friend of Comines, who foretold the death of Charles of Burgundy in the very time and hour when it took place at the battle of Morat. Upon this assurance Louis vowed a silver screen to the shrine of Saint Martin, which he afterwards fulfilled at the expense of one hundred thousand francs. It is well known, besides, that he was the abject and devoted slave of his physicians. Coctier, or Cottier, one of their number, besides the retaining fee of ten thousand crowns, extorted from his royal patient great sums in lands and

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money, and, in addition to all, the Bishopric of Amiens for his nephew. He maintained over Louis unbounded influence, by using to him the most disrespectful harshness and insolence. "I know," he said to the suffering King, "that one morning you will turn me adrift like so many others. But, by Heaven, you had better beware, for you will not live eight days after you have done so!" It is unnecessary to dwell longer on the fears and superstitions of a prince, whom the wretched love of life induced to submit to such indignities.

Note S, p. 399.—Philip des Comines.

There is little doubt that, during the interesting scene at Peronne, Philip des Comines first learned intimately to know the great powers of mind of Louis XI., by which he was so much dazzled, that it is impossible, in reading his Memoirs, not to be sensible that he was blinded by them to the more odious shades of his character. He entertained from this time forward a partiality to France. The historian passed into France about 1472, and rose high in the good graces of Louis XI. He afterwards became the proprietor of the lordship of Argenton and others, a title which was given him by anticipation in the former editions of this work. He did not obtain it till he was in the French service. After the death of Louis, Philip des Comines fell under the suspicion of the daughter of Louis, called our Lady of Beaujeu, as too zealous a partisan of the rival House of Orleans. The historian himself was imprisoned for eight months in one of the iron cages which he has so forcibly described. It was there that he regretted the fate of a court-life. "I have ventured on the great ocean," he said in his affliction, "and the waves have devoured me." He was subjected to a trial, and exiled from court for some years by the Parliament of Paris, being found guilty of holding intercourse with disaffected persons. He survived this cloud, however, and was afterwards employed by Charles VIII. in one or two important missions, where talents were required. Louis XII. also transferred his favour to the historian, but did not employ him. He died at his Castle of Argenton in 1509, and was regretted as one of the most profound statesmen, and certainly the best historian, of his age. In a poem to his memory by the poet Ronsard, he received the distinguished praise that he was the first to show the lustre which valour and noble blood derived from being united with learning.

Note T, p. 427.—The Disguised Herald.

The heralds of the middle ages, like the *feciales* of the Romans, were invested with a character which was held almost sacred. To strike a herald was a crime which inferred a capital punishment; and to counterfeit the character of such an august official was a degree of treason towards those men, who were accounted the depositaries of the secrets of monarchs and the honour of nobles. Yet a prince so unscrupulous as Louis XI. did not hesitate to practise such an imposition, when he wished to enter into communication with Edward IV. of England.

Exercising that knowledge of mankind for which he was so eminent, he selected, as an agent fit for his purpose, a simple valet. This man, whose address had been known to him, he disguised as a herald, with all the in-

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signia of his office, and sent him in that capacity to open a communication with the English army. Two things are remarkable in this transaction First, that the stratagem, though of so fraudulent a nature, does not seem to have been necessarily called for, since all that King Louis could gain by it would be, that he did not commit himself by sending a more responsible messenger. The other circumstance worthy of notice is, that Comines, though he mentions the affair at great length, is so pleased with the King's shrewdness in selecting, and dexterity at indoctrinating, his pseudo-herald, that he forgets all remark on the impudence and fraud of the imposition, as well as the great risk of discovery. From both which circumstances we are led to the conclusion, that the solemn character which the heralds endeavoured to arrogate to themselves had already begun to lose regard among statesmen and men of the great world.

Even Ferne, zealous enough for the dignity of the herald, seems to impute this intrusion on their rights in some degree to necessity. "I have heard some," he says, "but with shame enough, allow of the action of Louis XI. of the kingdom of France, who had so unknightly a regard both of his own honour and also of armes, that he seldom had about his court any officer-at-armes. And therefore, at such time as Edward IV., King of England, had entered France with a hostile power, and lay before the town of Saint Quentin, the same French King, for want of a herald to carry his mind to the English King, was constrained to suborn a vadelict, or common serving-man, with a trumpet-banner, having a hole made through the middest for this preposterous herauld to put his head through, and to cast it over his shoulders instead of a better coat-armour of France. And thus came this hastily-arrayed courier as a counterfeit officer-at-armes, with instructions from his sovereign's mouth to offer peace to our King. 'Well,' replies Torquatus, the other interlocutor in the dialogue, 'that fault was never yet to be seen in any of our English Kings, nor ever shall be, I hope.'"—FERNE'S *Blazon of Gentry*, 1586, p. 161.

In this curious book, the author, besides some assertions in favour of coat-armour, too nearly approaching blasphemy to be quoted, informs us, that the Apostles were gentlemen of blood, and many of them descended from that worthy conqueror, Judas Maccabæus; but through the course of time and persecution of wars, poverty oppressed the kindred, and they were constrained to servile works. So were the four doctors and fathers of the church (Ambrose, Augustine, Hierome, and Gregorie) gentlemen both of blood and arms, p. 98. The Author's copy of this rare tract (memorial of a hopeful young friend, now no more*) exhibits a curious sally of the national and professional irritability of a Scottish herald.

This person appears to have been named Thomas Drysdale, Islay Herald, who purchased the volume in 1619, and seems to have perused it with patience and profit till he came to the following passage in Ferne, which enters into the distinction between sovereign and feudatory crowns. "There is also a King, and he a homager, or fœdatorie to the estate and majestie of another King, as to his superior lord, as that of Scotland to our English empire." This assertion set on fire the Scottish blood of Islay Herald, who, forgetting the book had been printed nearly forty years before, and that the author was probably dead, writes on the margin in great wrath, and in

* Mr. Thomas Shortreed, who died in 1826, eldest son of the Author's old friend, the Sheriff-substitute of Roxburghshire.

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a half-text hand, "*He is a traitor and lyar in his throat, and I offer him the combat, that says Scotland's Kings were ever feudatorie to England.*"

Note U, p. 455.—Attack on Liege.

The Duke of Burgundy, full of resentment for the usage which the Bishop had received from the people of Liege (whose death, as already noticed, did not take place for some years after), and knowing that the walls of the town had not been repaired since they were breached by himself after the battle of Saint Tron, advanced recklessly to their chastisement. His commanders shared his presumptuous confidence: for the advanced guard of his army, under the Maréchal of Burgundy and Seigneur D'Hymbercourt, rushed upon one of the suburbs, without waiting for the rest of their army, which, commanded by the Duke in person, remained about seven or eight leagues in the rear. The night was closing, and, as the Burgundian troops observed no discipline, they were exposed to a sudden attack from a party of the citizens commanded by Jean de Vilde, who, assaulting them in front and rear, threw them into great disorder, and killed more than eight hundred men, of whom one hundred were men-at-arms.

When Charles and the King of France came up, they took up their quarters in two villas situated near to the wall of the city. In the two or three days which followed, Louis was distinguished for the quiet and regulated composure with which he pressed the siege, and provided for defence in case of sallies; while the Duke of Burgundy, no way deficient in courage, and who showed the rashness and want of order which was his principal characteristic, seemed also extremely suspicious that the King would desert him and join with the Liegeois.

They lay before the town for five or six days, and at length fixed the 30th of October, 1468, for a general storm. The citizens, who had probably information of their intent, resolved to prevent their purpose, and determined on anticipating it by a desperate sally through the breaches in their walls. They placed at their head six hundred of the men of the little territory of Franchemont, belonging to the Bishopric of Liege, and reckoned the most valiant of their troops. They burst out of the town on a sudden, surprised the Duke of Burgundy's quarters, ere his guards could put on their armour, which they had laid off to enjoy some repose before the assault. The King of France's lodgings were also attacked and endangered. A great confusion ensued, augmented incalculably by the mutual jealousy and suspicions of the French and Burgundians. The people of Liege were, however, unable to maintain their hardy enterprise, when the men-at-arms of the King and Duke began to recover from their confusion, and were finally forced to retire within their walls, after narrowly missing the chance of surprising both King Louis and the Duke of Burgundy, the most powerful Princes of their time. At daybreak the storm took place, as had been originally intended, and the citizens, disheartened and fatigued by the nocturnal sally, did not make so much resistance as was expected. Liege was taken and miserably pillaged, without regard to sex or age, things sacred or things profane. These particulars are fully related by Comines in his Memoirs, liv. ii. chaps. 11, 12, 13, and do not differ much from the account of the same events given in the text.

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NOTE V, p. 467.—COUNT DE LA MARCK.

We have already noticed the anachronism respecting the crimes of this atrocious baron; and it is scarce necessary to repeat, that if he in reality murdered the Bishop of Liege in 1482, the Count of La Marck could not be slain in the defence of Liege four years earlier. In fact, the Wild Boar of Ardennes, as he was usually termed, was of high birth, being the third son of John I., Count of La Marck and Aremberg, and ancestor of the branch called Barons of Lumain. He did not escape the punishment due to his atrocity, though it did not take place at the time, or in the manner narrated in the text. Maximilian, Emperor of Austria, caused him to be arrested at Utrecht, where he was beheaded in the year 1485, three years after the Bishop of Liege's death.

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GLOSSARY TO QUENTIN DURWARD.

AD SACRA, *Lat.* for holy things.
ANNUNCIO VOBIS GAUDIUM MAGNUM, *Lat.*, I announce to you great joy.
ASSIETE, *Fren.*, dish.
AUBERGE, *Fren.*, inn.
AUTANT DE PERDU, *Fren.*, so much lost.
AUXERRE EST LE BOISSON DES ROIS, *Fren.*, Auxerre wine is the drink of kings.

BADAUD, *Fren.*, a loafer.
BANDE NOIRE, *Fren.*, black gang.
BAVAROISE, *Fren.*, Bavarian beer.
BEATI QUI IN DOMINO MORIUNTUR, *Lat.*, "Blessed be the dead that die in the Lord."
BIFTECK DE MOUTON, *Fren.*, beefsteak of mutton!
BOUILLI, *Fren.*, boiled meat.
BRANTWEIN, *Ger.*, brandy.
BUFFET, *Fren.*, a cupboard.

CERNEAUX, *Fren.*, walnuts.
CHAPEAU À-PLUMES, *Fren.*, a hat with feathers.
CI-DEVANT, *Fren.*, formerly.
CUISINE, *Fren.*, cookery.
CURNEY, *Scot.*, small number.

DAFFING, *Scot.*, frolicking.
DEMI-SOLDE, *Fren.*, half-pay.
DONNER UND BLITZ, *Ger.*, thunder and lightning.
DU BIST EIN COMISCHE MAN, *Ger.*, you are a droll fellow.

ECLAIRCISSEMENT, *Fren.*, a clearing-up.
ECORCHEUR, *Fren.*, fleecer.
ETIAM IN CUBICULO, *Lat.*, even in the closet.

FACTIONNAIRES, *Fren.*, sentries.
FAHNLEIN, *Ger.*, pennon.
FASTE, *Fren.*, show.
FERME ORNÉE, *Fren.*, an ornamental farm.
FIER COMME UN ECOSSOIS, *Fren.*, proud as a Scot.
FOURIER, *Fren.*, quartermaster.
FUNIS CORONAT OPUS, *Lat.*, the rope crowns the work.

GARÇON PERRUQUIER, *Fren.*, hairdresser.
GENS DE LETTRES, *Fren.*, men of letters.
GRAND CHÈRE, *Fren.*, high feasting.
GUINGETTES, *Fren.*, taverns.
GUT GETROFFEN, *Ger.*, well hit.

HAGEL UND STURMWETTER, *Ger.*, hell and storm.
HANAP, *Fren.*, a drinking-cup.
HAUPTMAN, *Ger.*, chief.
HAUT-DES-CHAUSSES A CANON, *Fren.*, tight breeches.
HERTZOG, *Ger.*, Earl.
HOMME COMME IL FAUT, *Fren.*, quite a gentleman.
HÔPITAL DES FOUS, *Fren.*, asylum for the insane.
HORS DE PAGE, *Fren.*, beyond the position of a page.

IMPOSUIT MANUS IN CHRISTOS DOMINI, *Lat.*, "stretched forth his hand on the Lord's anointed."

JARDIN ANGLOIS, *Fren.*, an English garden.
JEAN-QUI-PLEURE, *Fren.*, John who weeps.
JEAN-QUI-RIT, *Fren.*, John who laughs.
JEUNESSE, *Fren.*, young woman.
JOUR MAIGRE, *Fren.*, fast-day.

LAPIS OFFENSIONIS ET PETRA SCANDALI, *Lat.*, "a stumbling block and rock of offence."
LINEA VITÆ, *Lat.*, the thread of life

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METAIRIE, *Fren.*, workshop.
MIEUX VAULT BON REPAS QUE BEL HABIT, *Fren.*, better wish a good dinner than a fine dress.
MINTING AT, *Scot.*, aiming at.
MORE MEO, *Lat.*, my own way.
MORTDIEU, *Fren.*, 'sdeath!

NE MOLIARIS AMICO TUO MALUM, CUM HABET IN TE FIDUCIAM, *Lat.*, "Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee."

PASQUES-DIEU, *Fren.*, By Christ!
PASSER LE TEMPS, *Fren.*, to pass the time.
PÂTÉ DE PERIGOORD, *Fren.*, goose-liver pie.
PAUVRES REVENANTS, *Fren.*, poor spectres.
PEREAT IMPROBUS, AMEN, ANATHEMA ESTO! *Lat.*, Let the wicked perish, Amen, and be anathema.
PETIT POINT DE L'AIL, *Fren.*, a small bit of garlic.
PILLEUR, *Fren.*, robber.
PIRN, *Scot.*, a winding-reel.
POTENCE, *Fren.*, gibbet.
POTZ TOUSEND, *Ger.* exclamation.
POW, *Scot.*, head.
PREVENANCE, *Fren.*, attention.
PUCELLE, *Fren.*, virgin.

QUIS CUSTODIAT IPSOS CUSTODES? *Lat.*, who shall guard those guardians?

SANCTE JULIANE, ADSIS PRECIBUS NOSTRIS! ORA, ORA PRO NOBIS! *Lat.*, Holy Julian, listen to our prayers! pray, pray for us!
SANGLIER, *Fren.*, a boar.
SAINT BLEU, *Fren.*, Good God!
SCHWARTZ BIER, *Ger.*, black beer.
SHOOL, *Scot.*, shovel.
SI NON PAYATIS, BRULABO MONASTERIUM VESTRUM, *bad Latin*, If you do not pay, I shall burn your monastery.
SIGILLUM CONFESSIONIS, *Lat.*, the seal of confession.
SKAITH, *Scot.*, harm.
STRAICK, *Scot.*, a measure.

TABATIÈRE, *Fren.*, snuff-box.
TABOURET, *Fren.*, a stool.
TETE-BLEU and TETE DIEU, *Fren.*, God's head!
TOIFEL, *Ger.*, devil.
TONDEUR, *Fren.*, clipper.

VAE VICTIS, *Lat.*, woe to the vanquished.
VARIUM ET MUTABILE, *Lat.*, fickle and changeable.
VENTRE SAINT-DIEU, *Fren.*, God Almighty!
VIEUX ROUTIER, *Fren.*, an old stager.
VIN ORDINAIRE, *Fren.*, the wine in common use.
VOTA DIIS EXAUDITA MALIGNIS, *Lat.*, prayers granted by the gods in their anger.

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END OF QUENTIN DURWARD.

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ST. RONAN'S WELL

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

A merry place 'tis said, in days of yore;
But something ails it now—the place is cursed.
WORDSWORTH.

THE CLEIKUM INN

EDINBURGH: ADAM & CHARLES BLACK
1883

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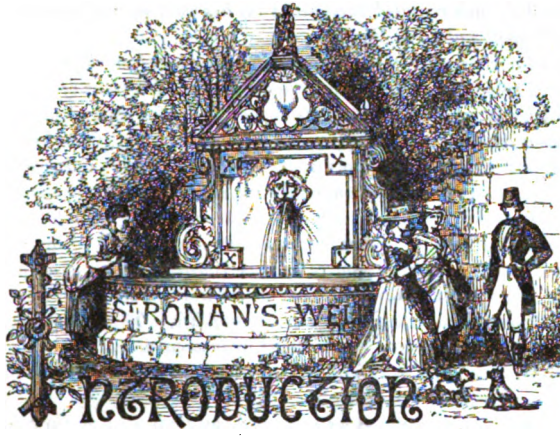

INTRODUCTION

THE novel which follows is upon a plan different from any other that the Author has ever written, although it is perhaps the most legitimate which relates to this kind of light literature.

It is intended, in a word—celebrare domestica facta—*to give an imitation of the shifting manners of our own time, and paint scenes, the originals of which are daily passing round us, so that a minute's observation may compare the copies with the originals. It must be confessed that this style of composition was adopted by the Author rather from the tempting circumstance of its offering some novelty in his compositions, and avoiding worn-out characters and positions, than from the hope of rivalling the many formidable competitors who have already won deserved honours in this department. The ladies, in particular, gifted by nature with keen powers of observation and light satire, have been so distinguished by these works of talent, that, reckoning from the authoress of Evelina* to her of Marriage,† a catalogue might be made, including the brilliant and talented names of Edgeworth, Austin, Charlotte Smith, and others, whose success seems to have appropriated this province of the novel as exclusively their own. It was therefore with a sense of temerity that the Author intruded upon a species of composition which had been of late practised with such*

[* Miss Burney. † Miss Ferrier.]

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distinguished success. This consciousness was lost, however, under the necessity of seeking for novelty, without which it was much to be apprehended, such repeated incursions on his part would nauseate the long indulgent public at the last.

The scene chosen for the Author's little drama of modern life was a mineral spring, such as are to be found in both divisions of Britain, and which are supplied with the usual materials for redeeming health, or driving away care. The invalid often finds relief from his complaints, less from the healing virtues of the Spa itself, than because his system of ordinary life undergoes an entire change, in his being removed from his ledger and account-books—from his legal folios and progresses of title-deeds—from his counters and shelves—from whatever else forms the main source of his constant anxiety at home, destroys his appetite, mars the custom of his exercise, deranges the digestive powers, and clogs up the springs of life. Thither, too, comes the saunterer, anxious to get rid of that wearisome attendant himself; *and thither come both males and females, who, upon a different principle, desire to make themselves double.**

The society of such places is regulated, by their very nature, upon a scheme much more indulgent than that which rules the world of fashion, and the narrow circles of rank in the metropolis. The titles of rank, birth, and fortune, are received at a watering-place without any very strict investigation, as adequate to the purpose for which they are preferred; and as the situation infers a certain degree of intimacy and sociability for the time, so, to whatever heights it may have been carried, it is not understood to imply any duration beyond the length of the season. No intimacy can be supposed more close for the time, and more transitory in its endurance, than that which is attached to a watering-place acquaintance. The novelist, therefore,

* NOTE—GILSLAND SPA.

[Mr. Lockhart tells us that, "after the rising of the Court of Session in July 1797, Scott set out on a tour to the lakes of Cumberland, and at length fixed his head-quarters at the then peaceful and sequestered little watering-place of Gilsland, from which he made excursions to the various scenes of romantic interest commemorated in the *Bridal of Triermain*, and otherwise led very much the sort of life depicted among the loungers of *St. Ronan's Well*." Here also he fell in with his future wife, with whom he revisited the spa in 1805.

There has been some dubiety expressed respecting the probable prototype of St. Ronan's Well, and several villages have laid claim to the identity. Judging, however, from the descriptions in the novel, it is certain the Author had no single place in his mind, but allowed his imagination a much wider range. While the scenery and localities depicted in the text may be partly recognised in Tweedside and the villages of Selkirk, Peebles, or Innerleithen, the descriptions of spa-life will more correctly apply to such a watering-place as that of Gilsland.]

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who fixes upon such a scene for his tale, endeavours to display a species of society, where the strongest contrast of humorous characters and manners may be brought to bear on and illustrate each other, with less violation of probability than could be supposed to attend the same miscellaneous assemblage in any other situation.

In such scenes, too, are frequently mingled characters, not merely ridiculous, but dangerous and hateful. The unprincipled gamester, the heartless fortune-hunter, all those who eke out their means of subsistence by pandering to the vices and follies of the rich and gay—who drive, by their various arts, foibles into crimes, and imprudence into acts of ruinous madness, are to be found where their victims naturally resort, with the same certainty that eagles are gathered together at the place of slaughter. By this the Author takes a great advantage for the management of his story, particularly in its darker and more melancholy passages. The impostor, the gambler, all who live loose upon the skirts of society, or, like vermin, thrive by its corruptions, are to be found at such retreats, when they easily, and as a matter of course, mingle with these dupes, who might otherwise have escaped their snares. But besides those characters who are actually dangerous to society, a well-frequented watering-place generally exhibits for the amusement of the company, and the perplexity and amazement of the more inexperienced, a sprinkling of persons, called by the newspapers eccentric characters—individuals, namely, who, either from some real derangement of their understanding, or, much more frequently, from an excess of vanity, are ambitious of distinguishing themselves by some striking peculiarity in dress or address, conversation or manners, and perhaps in all. These affectations are usually adopted, like Drawcansir's extravagances, to show* they dare, *and, I must needs say, those who profess them are more frequently to be found among the English, than among the natives of either of the other two divisions of the united kingdoms. The reason probably is, that the consciousness of wealth, and a sturdy feeling of independence, which generally pervade the English nation, are, in a few individuals, perverted into absurdity, or at least peculiarity. The witty Irishman, on the contrary, adapts his general behaviour to that of the best society, or that which he thinks such; nor is it any part of the shrewd Scot's national character unnecessarily to draw upon himself public attention. These rules, however, are not without their exceptions;*

* [Drawcansir was a name used in some of the controversial pamphlets connected with the "Medical Wars" carried on in Edinburgh about the time this was written.]

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for we find men of every country playing the eccentric at these independent resorts of the gay and the wealthy, where every one enjoys the license of doing what is good in his own eyes.

It scarce needed these obvious remarks to justify a novelist's choice of a watering-place as the scene of a fictitious narrative. Unquestionably it affords every variety of character, mixed together in a manner which cannot, without a breach of probability, be supposed to exist elsewhere; neither can it be denied, that in the concourse which such miscellaneous collections of persons afford, events extremely different from those of the quiet routine of ordinary life may, and often do, take place.

It is not, however, sufficient that a mine be in itself rich and easily accessible; it is necessary that the engineer who explores it should himself, in mining phrase, have an accurate knowledge of the country, *and possess the skill necessary to work it to advantage. In this respect, the Author of St. Ronan's Well could not be termed fortunate. His habits of life had not led him much, of late years at least, into its general or bustling scenes, nor had he mingled often in the society which enables the observer to "shoot folly as it flies." The consequence perhaps was, that the characters wanted that force and precision which can only be given by a writer who is familiarly acquainted with his subject.* The Author, however, had the satisfaction to chronicle his testimony against the practice of gambling, a vice which the devil has contrived to render all his own, since it is deprived of whatever pleads an apology for other vices, and is founded entirely on the cold-blooded calculation of the most exclusive selfishness. The character of the traveller, meddling, self-important, and what the ladies call fussing, but yet generous and benevolent in his purposes, was partly taken from nature. The story, being entirely modern, cannot require much explanation, after what has been here given, either in the shape of notes, or a more prolix introduction.*

It may be remarked, that the English critics, in many instances, though none of great influence, pursued St. Ronan's Well with hue and cry, many of the fraternity giving it as their opinion that the Author had exhausted himself, or, as the technical phrase expresses it, written himself out; and as an unusual tract of success too often provokes many persons to mark and exaggerate a slip when it does occur, the Author was publicly accused, in prose and verse, of having committed a literary suicide in this unhappy attempt. The voices, therefore, were, for a time, against St. Ronan's on the Southern side of the Tweed.

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In the Author's country it was otherwise. Many of the characters were recognised as genuine Scottish portraits, and the good fortune which had hitherto attended the productions of the Author of Waverley, did not desert, notwithstanding the ominous vaticinations of its censurers, this new attempt, although out of his ordinary style.

ABBOTSFORD, 1*st February* 1832.

* NOTE—WATERING-PLACE CHARACTERS.

["There is no doubt the Author dashed off the minor personages in "St. Ronan's Well" with—to use a painter's phrase—*a rich brush;* but I believe they have far more truth about them than the critics seemed willing to allow; and if any of my readers, whether Scotch or English, has ever happened to spend a few months, not in either an English or a Scotch watering-place of the present day, but among such miscellaneous assemblages of British nondescripts and outcasts—including often persons of higher birth than any of the *beau monde* of St. Ronan's Well—as now infest many towns of France and Switzerland, he will, I am satisfied, be inclined to admit that, while the Continent was shut, as it was in the days of Sir Walter's youthful wanderings, a trip to such a sequestered place as Gilsland, or Moffat, or Innerleithen—(almost as inaccessible to London duns and bailiffs as the Isle of Man was then, or as Boulogne and Dieppe are now)—may have supplied the future novelist's notebook with authentic materials even for such worthies as Sir Bingo and Lady Binks, Dr. Quackleben and Mr. Winterblossom. It should, moreover, be borne in mind, that during our insular blockade, northern watering-places were not alone favoured by the resort of questionable characters from the south. The comparative cheapness of living, and especially of education, procured for Sir Walter's "own romantic town" a constant succession of such visitants, so long as they could have no access to the *tables d'hôte* and dancing-saloons of the Continent. When I first mingled in the society of Edinburgh, it abounded with English, broken in character and in fortune, who found a mere title (even a baronet's one) of consequence enough to obtain for them, from the proverbially cautious Scotch, a degree of attention to which they had long been unaccustomed among those who had chanced to observe the progress of their personal histories; and I heard many name, when the novel was new, a booby of some rank, in whom they recognised a sufficiently accurate prototype for Sir Bingo."—J. G. LOCKHART.]

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AN OLD-WORLD LANDLADY.

> But to make up my tale,
> She breweth good ale,
> And thereof maketh sale.
>
> SKELTON.

ALTHOUGH few, if any, of the countries of Europe have increased so rapidly in wealth and cultivation as Scotland during the last half-century, Sultan Mahmoud's owls might nevertheless have found in Caledonia, at any term within that flourishing period, their dowery of ruined villages. Accident or local advantages have, in many instances, transferred the inhabitants of ancient hamlets, from the situations which their predecessors chose, with more respect to security than convenience, to those in which their increasing industry and commerce could more easily expand itself; and hence places which stand distinguished in Scottish history, and which figure in David M'Pherson's excellent historical map, can now only be discerned from the wild moor by the verdure which clothes their site, or, at best, by a few scattered ruins, resembling pinfolds, which mark the spot of their former existence.

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The little village of St. Ronan's, though it had not yet fallen into the state of entire oblivion we have described, was, about twenty years since, fast verging towards it. The situation had something in it so romantic, that it provoked the pencil of every passing tourist; and we will endeavour, therefore, to describe it in language which can scarcely be less intelligible than some of their sketches, avoiding, however, for reasons which seem to us of weight, to give any more exact indication of the site, than that it is on the southern side of the Forth, and not above thirty miles distant from the English frontier.*

A river of considerable magnitude pours its streams through a narrow vale, varying in breadth from two miles to a fourth of that distance, and which, being composed of rich alluvial soil, is, and has long been, enclosed, tolerably well inhabited, and cultivated with all the skill of Scottish agriculture. Either side of this valley is bounded by a chain of hills, which, on the right in particular, may be almost termed mountains. Little brooks arising in these ridges, and finding their way to the river, offer each its own little vale to the industry of the cultivator. Some of them bear fine large trees, which have as yet escaped the axe, and upon the sides of most there are scattered patches and fringes of natural copsewood, above and around which the banks of the stream arise, somewhat desolate in the colder months, but in summer glowing with dark purple heath, or with the golden lustre of the broom and gorse. This is a sort of scenery peculiar to those countries, which abound, like Scotland, in hills and in streams, and where the traveller is ever and anon discovering, in some intricate and unexpected recess, a simple and silvan beauty, which pleases him the more, that it seems to be peculiarly his own property as the first discoverer.

In one of these recesses, and so near its opening as to command the prospect of the river, the broader valley, and the opposite chain of hills, stood, and, unless neglect and desertion have completed their work, still stands, the ancient and decayed village of St. Ronan's. The site was singularly picturesque, as the straggling street of the village ran up a very steep hill, on the side of which were clustered, as it were upon little terraces, the cottages which composed the place, seeming, as in the Swiss towns on the Alps, to rise above each other towards the ruins of an old castle, which continued to occupy the crest of the

* [See note to Introduction, p. 2.]

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eminence, and the strength of which had doubtless led the neighbourhood to assemble under its walls for protection. It must, indeed, have been a place of formidable defence, for, on the side opposite to the town, its walls rose straight up from the verge of a tremendous and rocky precipice, whose base was washed by St. Ronan's Burn, as the brook was entitled. On the southern side, where the declivity was less precipitous, the ground had been carefully levelled into successive terraces, which ascended to the summit of the hill, and were, or rather had been, connected by staircases of stone, rudely ornamented. In peaceful periods these terraces had been occupied by the gardens of the Castle, and in times of siege they added to its security, for each commanded the one immediately below it, so that they could be separately and successively defended, and all were exposed to the fire from the place itself—a massive square tower of the largest size, surrounded, as usual, by lower buildings, and a high embattled wall. On the northern side arose a considerable mountain, of which the descent that lay between the eminence on which the Castle was situated seemed a detached portion, and which had been improved and deepened by three successive huge trenches. Another very deep trench was drawn in front of the main entrance from the east, where the principal gateway formed the termination of the street, which, as we have noticed, ascended from the village, and this last defence completed the fortifications of the tower.

In the ancient gardens of the Castle, and upon all sides of it excepting the western, which was precipitous, large old trees had found root, mantling the rock and the ancient and ruinous walls with their dusky verdure, and increasing the effect of the shattered pile which towered up from the centre.

Seated on the threshold of this ancient pile, where the "proud porter" had in former days "reared himself,"* a stranger had a complete and commanding view of the decayed village, the houses of which, to a fanciful imagination, might seem as if they had been suddenly arrested in hurrying down the precipitous hill, and fixed as if by magic in the whimsical arrangement which they now presented. It was like a sudden pause in one of Amphion's country-dances, when the huts which were to form the future Thebes were jigging it to his lute. But, with such an observer; the melancholy excited by the desolate appearance

* See the old ballad of King Estmere, in PERCY'S *Reliques*.

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of the village soon overcame all the lighter frolics of the imagination. Originally constructed on the humble plan used in the building of Scotch cottages about a century ago, the greater part of them had been long deserted; and their fallen roofs, blackened gables, and ruinous walls, showed Desolation's triumph over Poverty. On some huts the rafters, varnished with soot, were still standing, in whole or in part, like skeletons, and a few, wholly or partially covered with thatch, seemed still inhabited, though scarce habitable; for the smoke of the peat-fires, which prepared the humble meal of the indwellers, stole upwards, not only from the chimneys, its regular vent, but from various other crevices in the roofs. Nature, in the meanwhile, always changing, but renewing as she changes, was supplying, by the power of vegetation, the fallen and decaying marks of human labour. Small pollards, which had been formerly planted around the little gardens, had now waxed into huge and high forest-trees; the fruit-trees had extended their branches over the verges of the little yards, and the hedges had shot up into huge and irregular bushes; while quantities of dock, and nettles, and hemlock, hiding the ruined walls, were busily converting the whole scene of desolation into a picturesque forest bank.

Two houses in St. Ronan's were still in something like decent repair; places essential—the one to the spiritual weal of the inhabitants, the other to the accommodation of travellers. These were the clergyman's manse, and the village inn. Of the former we need only say that it formed no exception to the general rule by which the landed proprietors of Scotland seem to proceed in lodging their clergy, not only in the cheapest, but in the ugliest and most inconvenient house which the genius of masonry can contrive. It had the usual number of chimneys—two, namely—rising like asses' ears at either end, which answered the purpose for which they were designed as ill as usual. It had all the ordinary leaks and inlets to the fury of the elements, which usually form the subject of the complaints of a Scottish incumbent to his brethren of the Presbytery; and, to complete the picture, the clergyman being a bachelor, the pigs had unmolested admission to the garden and courtyard, broken windows were repaired with brown paper, and the disordered and squalid appearance of a low farm-house, occupied by a bankrupt tenant, dishonoured the dwelling of one, who, besides his clerical character, was a scholar and a gentleman, though little of a humorist.

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Beside the manse stood the kirk of St. Ronan's, a little old mansion with a clay floor, and an assemblage of wretched pews, originally of carved oak, but heedfully clouted with white fir-deal. But the external form of the church was elegant in the outline, having been built in Catholic times, when we cannot deny to the forms of ecclesiastical architecture that grace, which, as good Protestants, we refuse to their doctrine. The fabric hardly raised its grey and vaulted roof among the crumbling hills of mortality by which it was surrounded, and was indeed so small in size, and so much lowered in height by the graves on the outside, which ascended half-way up the low Saxon windows, that it might itself have appeared only a funeral vault, or mausoleum of larger size. Its little square tower, with the ancient belfry, alone distinguished it from such a monument. But when the grey-headed beadle turned the keys with his shaking hand, the antiquary was admitted into an ancient building, which, from the style of its architecture, and some monuments of the Mowbrays of St. Ronan's, which the old man was accustomed to point out, was generally conjectured to be as early as the thirteenth century.

These Mowbrays of St. Ronan's seem to have been at one time a very powerful family. They were allied to and friends of the house of Douglas, at the time when the overgrown power of that heroic race made the Stewarts tremble on the Scottish throne. It followed that, when, as our old *naïf* historian expresses it, "no one dared to strive with a Douglas, nor yet with a Douglas's man, for if he did, he was sure to come by the waur," the family of St. Ronan's shared their prosperity, and became lords of almost the whole of the rich valley of which their mansion commanded the prospect. But upon the turning of the tide, in the reign of James II., they became despoiled of the greater part of those fair acquisitions, and succeeding events reduced their importance still farther. Nevertheless, they were, in the middle of the seventeenth century, still a family of considerable note; and Sir Reginald Mowbray, after the unhappy battle of Dunbar, distinguished himself by the obstinate defence of the Castle against the arms of Cromwell, who, incensed at the opposition which he had unexpectedly encountered in an obscure corner, caused the fortress to be dismantled and blown up with gunpowder.

After this catastrophe, the old Castle was abandoned to

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ruin; but Sir Reginald, when, like Allan Ramsay's Sir William Worthy, he returned after the Revolution, built himself a house in the fashion of that later age, which he prudently suited in size to the diminished fortunes of his family. It was situated about the middle of the village, whose vicinity was not in those days judged any inconvenience, upon a spot of ground more level than was presented by the rest of the acclivity, where, as we said before, the houses were notched as it were into the side of the steep bank, with little more level ground about them than the spot occupied by their site. But the Laird's house had a court in front and a small garden behind, connected with another garden, which, occupying three terraces, descended, in emulation of the orchards of the old Castle, almost to the banks of the stream.

The family continued to inhabit this new messuage until about fifty years before the commencement of our history, when it was much damaged by a casual fire; and the Laird of the day, having just succeeded to a more pleasant and commodious dwelling at the distance of about three miles from the village, determined to abandon the habitation of his ancestors. As he cut down at the same time an ancient rookery (perhaps to defray the expenses of the migration), it became a common remark among the country folk, that the decay of St. Ronan's began when Laird Lawrence and the crows flew off.

The deserted mansion, however, was not consigned to owls and birds of the desert; on the contrary, for many years it witnessed more fun and festivity than when it had been the sombre abode of a grave Scottish Baron of "auld lang syne." In short, it was converted into an inn, and marked by a huge sign, representing on the one side St. Ronan catching hold of the devil's game-leg with his Episcopal crook, as the story may be read in his veracious legend, and on the other the Mowbray arms. It was by far the best frequented public-house in that vicinity; and a thousand stories were told of the revels which had been held within its walls, and the gambols achieved under the influence of its liquors. All this, however, had long since passed away, according to the lines in my frontispiece.

> "A merry place, 'twas said, in days of yore;
> But something ail'd it now—the place was cursed."

The worthy couple (servants and favourites of the Mowbray

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family) who first kept the inn, had died reasonably wealthy, after long carrying on a flourishing trade, leaving behind them an only daughter. They had acquired by degrees not only the property of the inn itself, of which they were originally tenants, but of some remarkably good meadow-land by the side of the brook, which, when touched by a little pecuniary necessity, the Lairds of St. Ronan's had disposed of piecemeal, as the readiest way to portion off a daughter, procure a commission for the younger son, and the like emergencies. So that Meg Dods, when she succeeded to her parents, was a considerable heiress, and, as such, had the honour of refusing three topping farmers, two bonnet-lairds, and a horse-couper, who successively made proposals to her.

Many bets were laid on the horse-couper's success, but the knowing ones were taken in. Determined to ride the fore-horse herself, Meg would admit no helpmate who might soon assert the rights of a master; and so, in single blessedness, and with the despotism of Queen Bess herself, she ruled all matters with a high hand, not only over her men-servants and maid-servants, but over the stranger within her gates, who, if he ventured to oppose Meg's sovereign will and pleasure, or desired to have either fare or accommodation different from that which she chose to provide for him, was instantly ejected with that answer which Erasmus tells us silenced all complaints in the German inns of his time, *Quære aliud hospitium*,* or, as Meg expressed it, "Troop aff wi' ye to another public." As this amounted to a banishment in extent equal to sixteen miles from Meg's residence, the unhappy party on whom it was passed had no other refuge save by deprecating the wrath of his landlady, and resigning himself to her will. It is but justice to Meg Dods to state, that though hers was a severe and almost despotic government, it could not be termed a tyranny, since it was exercised upon the whole for the good of the subject.

The vaults of the old Laird's cellar had not, even in his own day, been replenished with more excellent wines; the only difficulty was to prevail on Meg to look for the precise liquor

* In a colloquy of Erasmus, called *Diversaria*, there is a very unsavoury description of a German inn of the period, where an objection of the guest is answered in the manner expressed in the text—a great sign of want of competition on the road.

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you chose;—to which it may be added, that she often became restive when she thought a company had had "as much as did them good," and refused to furnish any more supplies. Then her kitchen was her pride and glory; she looked to the dressing of every dish herself, and there were some with which she suffered no one to interfere. Such were the cock-a-leeky, and the savoury minced collops, which rivalled in their way even the veal cutlets of our old friend Mrs. Hall, at Ferrybridge. Meg's table-linen, bed-linen, and so forth, were always home-made, of the best quality, and in the best order; and a weary day was that to the chambermaid in which her lynx eye discovered any neglect of the strict cleanliness which she constantly enforced. Indeed, considering Meg's country and calling, we were never able to account for her extreme and scrupulous nicety, unless by supposing that it afforded her the most apt and frequent pretext for scolding her maids; an exercise in which she displayed so much eloquence and energy, that we must needs believe it to have been a favourite one.*

We have only farther to commemorate the moderation of Meg's reckonings, which, when they closed the banquet, often relieved the apprehensions, instead of saddening the heart, of the rising guest. A shilling for breakfast, three shillings for dinner, including a pint of old port, eighteenpence for a snug supper—such were the charges of the inn at St. Ronan's, under this landlady of the olden world, even after the nineteenth century had commenced; and they were ever tendered with the pious recollection, that her good father never charged half so much, but these weary times rendered it impossible for her to make the lawing less.†

Notwithstanding all these excellent and rare properties, the inn at St. Ronan's shared the decay of the village to which it belonged. This was owing to various circumstances. The high-road had been turned aside from the place, the steepness of the street being murder (so the postilions declared) to their post-horses. It was thought that Meg's stern refusal to treat them with liquor, or to connive at their exchanging for porter

* This circumstance shows of itself, that the Meg Dods of the tale cannot be identified with her namesake Jenny Dods, who kept the inn at Howgate, on the Peebles road; for Jenny, far different from our heroine, was unmatched as a slattern.

† Note A. Inn charges.

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and whisky the corn which should feed their cattle, had no small influence on the opinion of those respectable gentlemen, and that a little cutting and levelling would have made the ascent easy enough; but let that pass. This alteration of the highway was an injury which Meg did not easily forgive to the country gentlemen, most of whom she had recollected when children. "Their fathers," she said, "wad not have done the like of it to a lone woman." Then the decay of the village itself, which had formerly contained a set of feuars and bonnet-lairds, who, under the name of the Chirupping Club, contrived to drink twopenny, qualified with brandy or whisky, at least twice or thrice a-week, was some small loss.

The temper and manners of the landlady scared away all customers of that numerous class, who will not allow originality to be an excuse for the breach of decorum, and who, little accustomed perhaps to attendance at home, love to play the great man at an inn, and to have a certain number of bows, deferential speeches, and apologies, in answer to the G— d—n ye's which they bestow on the house, attendance, and entertainment. Unto those who commenced this sort of barter in the Clachan of St. Ronan's, well could Meg Dods pay it back, in their own coin; and glad they were to escape from the house with eyes not quite scratched out, and ears not more deafened than if they had been within hearing of a pitched battle.

Nature had formed honest Meg for such encounters; and as her noble soul delighted in them, so her outward properties were in what Tony Lumpkin calls a concatenation accordingly. She had hair of a brindled colour, betwixt black and grey, which was apt to escape in elf-locks from under her mutch when she was thrown into violent agitation—long skinny hands, terminated by stout talons—grey eyes, thin lips, a robust person, a broad, though flat chest, capital wind, and a voice that could match a choir of fish-women. She was accustomed to say of herself, in her more gentle moods, that her bark was worse than her bite; but what teeth could have matched a tongue, which, when in full career, is vouched to have been heard from the Kirk to the Castle of St. Ronan's?

These notable gifts, however, had no charms for the travellers of these light and giddy-paced times, and Meg's inn became less and less frequented. What carried the evil to the uttermost was, that a fanciful lady of rank in the neighbourhood

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chanced to recover of some imaginary complaint by the use of a mineral well about a mile and a half from the village; a fashionable doctor was found to write an analysis of the healing waters, with a list of sundry cures; a speculative builder took land in feu, and erected lodging-houses, shops, and even streets. At length a tontine subscription was obtained to erect an inn, which, for the more grace, was called a hotel; and so the desertion of Meg Dods became general.*

She had still, however, her friends and well-wishers, many of whom thought, that as she was a lone woman, and known to be well to pass in the world, she would act wisely to retire from public life, and take down a sign which had no longer fascination for guests. But Meg's spirit scorned submission direct or implied. "Her father's door," she said, "should be open to the road, till her father's bairn should be streekit and carried out at it with her feet foremost. It was not for the profit—there was little profit at it;—profit?—there was a dead loss;—but she wad not be dung by any of them. They maun hae a hottle,† maun they?—and an honest public canna serve them! They may hottle that likes; but they shall see that Lucky Dods can hottle on as lang as the best of them—ay, though they had made a Tamteen of it, and linkit a' their breaths of lives, whilk are in their nostrils, on end of ilk other like a string of wild-geese, and the langest liver bruick a' (whilk was sinful presumption), she would match ilk ane of them as lang as her ain wind held out." Fortunate it was for Meg, since she had formed this doughty resolution, that although her inn had decayed in custom, her land had risen in value in a degree which more than compensated the balance on the wrong side of her books, and, joined to her usual providence and economy, enabled her to act up to her lofty purpose.

She prosecuted her trade too with every attention to its diminished income; shut up the windows of one half of her house, to baffle the tax-gatherer; retrenched her furniture; discharged her pair of post-horses, and pensioned off the old hump-backed postilion who drove them, retaining his services, however, as an assistant to a still more aged hostler. To console herself for restrictions by which her pride was secretly wounded,

* Note B. Building-feus in Scotland.

† This Gallic word (hôtel) was first introduced in Scotland during the Author's childhood, and was so pronounced by the lower class.

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she agreed with the celebrated Dick Tinto to repaint her father's sign, which had become rather undecipherable; and Dick accordingly gilded the Bishop's crook and augmented the horrors of the Devil's aspect, until it became a terror to all the younger fry of the school-house, and a sort of visible illustration of the terrors of the arch-enemy, with which the minister endeavoured to impress their infant minds.

Under this renewed symbol of her profession, Meg Dods, or Meg Dorts, as she was popularly termed, on account of her refractory humours, was still patronised by some steady customers. Such were the members of the Killnakelty Hunt, once famous on the turf and in the field, but now a set of venerable grey-headed sportsmen, who had sunk from foxhounds to basket-beagles and coursing, and who made an easy canter on their quiet nags a gentle induction to a dinner at Meg's. "A set of honest decent men they were," Meg said; "had their sang and their joke—and what for no? Their bind was just a Scots pint over-head, and a tappit-hen to the bill, and no man ever saw them the waur o't. It was thae cockle-brained callants of the present day that would be mair owerta'en with a puir quart than douce folks were with a magnum."

Then there was a set of ancient brethren of the angle from Edinburgh, who visited St. Ronan's frequently in the spring and summer, a class of guests peculiarly acceptable to Meg, who permitted them more latitude in her premises than she was known to allow to any other body. "They were," she said, "pawky auld carles, that kend whilk side their bread was buttered upon. Ye never kend of ony o' them ganging to the spring, as they behoved to ca' the stinking well yonder.—Na, na—they were up in the morning—had their parritch, wi' maybe a thimbleful of brandy, and then awa' up into the hills, eat their bit cauld meat on the heather, and came hame at e'en wi' the creel full of caller trouts, and had them to their dinner, and their quiet cogue of ale, and their drap punch, and were set singing their catches and glees, as they ca'd them, till ten o'clock, and then to bed, wi' God bless ye—and what for no?"

Thirdly, we may commemorate some ranting blades, who also came from the metropolis to visit St. Ronan's, attracted by the humours of Meg, and still more by the excellence of her liquor, and the cheapness of her reckonings. These were members of the Helter Skelter Club, of the Wildfire Club, and

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other associations formed for the express purpose of getting rid of care and sobriety. Such dashers occasioned many a racket in Meg's house, and many a *bourasque* in Meg's temper. Various were the arts of flattery and violence by which they endeavoured to get supplies of liquor, when Meg's conscience told her they had had too much already. Sometimes they failed, as when the croupier of the Helter Skelter got himself scalded with the mulled wine, in an unsuccessful attempt to coax this formidable virago by a salute; and the excellent president of the Wildfire received a broken head from the keys of the cellar, as he endeavoured to possess himself of these emblems of authority. But little did these dauntless officials care for the exuberant frolics of Meg's temper, which were to them only "pretty Fanny's way"—the *dulces Amaryllidis iræ*. And Meg, on her part, though she often called them "drunken ne'er-do-weels, and thorough-bred High Street blackguards," allowed no other person to speak ill of them in her hearing. "They were daft callants," she said, "and that was all—when the drink was in the wit was out—ye could not put an auld head upon young shouthers—a young cowt will canter, be it up-hill or down—and what for no?" was her uniform conclusion.

Nor must we omit, among Meg's steady customers, "faithful amongst the unfaithful found," the copper-nosed sheriff-clerk of the county, who, when summoned by official duty to that district of the shire, warmed by recollections of her double-brewed ale, and her generous Antigua, always advertised that his "Prieves," or "Comptis," or whatever other business was in hand, were to proceed on such a day and hour, "within the house of Margaret Dods, vintner in St. Ronan's."

We have only farther to notice Meg's mode of conducting herself towards chance travellers, who, knowing nothing of nearer or more fashionable accommodations, or perhaps consulting rather the state of their purse than of their taste, stumbled upon her house of entertainment. Her reception of these was as precarious as the hospitality of a savage nation to sailors shipwrecked on their coast. If the guests seemed to have made her mansion their free choice—or if she liked their appearance (and her taste was very capricious)—above all, if they seemed pleased with what they got, and little disposed to criticise or give trouble, it was all very well. But if they had

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agreeable amusement—she just glanced at him as he entered, then turned her back short on him, and continued her labour and her soliloquy of lamentation. Truth is, she thought she recognised in the person of the stranger, one of those useful envoys of the commercial community, called by themselves and the waiters, *Travellers*, par excellence—by others, Riders and Bagmen. Now against this class of customers Meg had peculiar prejudices; because, there being no shops in the old village of St. Ronan's, the said commercial emissaries, for the convenience of their traffic, always took up their abode at the New Inn or Hotel, in the rising and rival village called St. Ronan's Well, unless when some straggler, by chance or dire necessity, was compelled to lodge himself at the Auld Town, as the place of Meg's residence began to be generally termed. She had, therefore, no sooner formed the hasty conclusion that the individual in question belonged to this obnoxious class, than she resumed her former occupation, and continued to soliloquise and apostrophise her absent handmaidens, without even appearing sensible of his presence.

"The huzzy Beenie—the jaud Eppie—the deil's buckie of a callant!—Another plate gane—they'll break me out of house and ha'!"

The traveller, who, with his saddle-bags rested on the back of a chair, had waited in silence for some note of welcome, now saw that ghost or no ghost he must speak first, if he intended to have any notice from his landlady.

"You are my old acquaintance, Mistress Margaret Dods?" said the stranger.

"What for no?—and wha are ye that speers?" said Meg, in the same breath, and began to rub a brass candlestick with more vehemence than before—the dry tone in which she spoke indicating plainly how little concern she took in the conversation.

"A traveller, good Mistress Dods, who comes to take up his lodgings here for a day or two."

"I am thinking ye will be mista'en," said Meg; "there's nae room for bags or jaugs here—ye've mista'en your road, neighbour—ye maun e'en bundle yoursell a bit farther down hill."

"I see you have not got the letter I sent you, Mistress Dods?" said the guest.

"How should I, man?" answered the hostess; "they have

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ta'en awa the post-office from us—moved it down till the Spa-well yonder, as they ca'd."

"Why, that is but a step off," observed the guest.

"Ye will get there the sooner," answered the hostess.

"Nay, but," said the guest, "if you had sent there for my letter, you would have learned"——

"I'm no wanting to learn onything at my years," said Meg. "If folk have onything to write to me about, they may gie the letter to John Hislop, the carrier, that has used the road these forty years. As for the letters at the post-mistress's, as they ca' her down by yonder, they may bide in her shop-window, wi' the snaps and bawbee rows, till Beltane, or I loose them. I'll never file my fingers with them. Post-mistress, indeed!—Upsetting cutty! I mind her fou weel when she dree'd penance for antenup"——

Laughing, but interrupting Meg in good time for the character of the post-mistress, the stranger assured her he had sent his fishing-rod and trunk to her confidential friend the carrier, and that he sincerely hoped she would not turn an old acquaintance out of her premises, especially as he believed he could not sleep in a bed within five miles of St. Ronan's, if he knew that her Blue room was unengaged.

"Fishing-rod!—Auld acquaintance!—Blue room!" echoed Meg in some surprise; and, facing round upon the stranger, and examining him with some interest and curiosity,—"Ye'll be nae bag-man, then, after a'?"

"No," said the traveller; "not since I have laid the saddle-bags out of my hand."

"Weel, I canna say but I am glad of that—I canna bide their yanking way of knapping English at every word.—I have kent decent lads amang them too—What for no?—But that was when they stopped up here whiles, like other douce folk; but since they gaed down, the hail flight of them, like a string of wild-geese, to the new-fashioned hottle yonder, I am told there are as mony hellicate tricks played in the travellers' room, as they behove to call it, as if it were fou of drunken young lairds."

"That is because they have not you to keep good order among them, Mistress Margaret."

"Ay, lad?" replied Meg; "ye are a fine blaw-in-my-lug, to think to cuitle me off sae cleverly!" And, facing about upon

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her guest, she honoured him with a more close and curious investigation than she had at first designed to bestow upon him.

All that she remarked was in her opinion rather favourable to the stranger. He was a well-made man, rather above than under the middle size, and apparently betwixt five-and-twenty and thirty years of age—for, although he might, at first glance, have passed for one who had attained the latter period, yet, on a nearer examination, it seemed as if the burning sun of a warmer climate than Scotland, and perhaps some fatigue, both of body and mind, had imprinted the marks of care and of manhood upon his countenance, without abiding the course of years. His eyes and teeth were excellent, and his other features, though they could scarce be termed handsome, expressed sense and acuteness; he bore, in his aspect, that ease and composure of manner, equally void of awkwardness and affectation, which is said emphatically to mark the gentleman; and, although neither the plainness of his dress, nor the total want of the usual attendants, allowed Meg to suppose him a wealthy man, she had little doubt that he was above the rank of her lodgers in general. Amidst these observations, and while she was in the course of making them, the good landlady was embarrassed with various obscure recollections of having seen the object of them formerly; but when, or on what occasion, she was quite unable to call to remembrance. She was particularly puzzled by the cold and sarcastic expression of a countenance, which she could not by any means reconcile with the recollections which it awakened. At length she said, with as much courtesy as she was capable of assuming,—"Either I have seen you before, sir, or some ane very like ye?—Ye ken the Blue room, too, and you a stranger in these parts?"

"Not so much a stranger as you may suppose, Meg," said the guest, assuming a more intimate tone, "when I call myself Frank Tyrrel."

"Tirl!" exclaimed Meg, with a tone of wonder—"It's impossible! You cannot be Francie Tirl, the wild callant that was fishing and bird-nesting here seven or eight years syne—it canna be—Francie was but a callant!"

"But add seven or eight years to that boy's life, Meg," said the stranger, gravely, "and you will find you have the man who is now before you."

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"Even sae!" said Meg, with a glance at the reflection of her own countenance in the copper coffee-pot, which she had scoured so brightly that it did the office of a mirror—"Just e'en sae—but folk maun grow auld or die.—But, Mr. Tirl, for I maunna ca' ye Francie now, I am thinking"——

"Call me what you please, good dame," said the stranger; "it has been so long since I heard any one call me by a name that sounded like former kindness, that such a one is more agreeable to me than a lord's title would be."

"Weel, then, Maister Francie—if it be no offence to you—I hope ye are no a Nabob?"

"Not I, I can safely assure you, my old friend;—but what an I were?"

"Naething—only maybe I might bid ye gang farther, and be waur served.—Nabobs indeed! the country's plagued wi' them. They have raised the price of eggs and pootry for twenty miles round—But what is my business?—They use almaist a' of them the Well down by—they need it ye ken for the clearing of their copper complexions, that need scouring as much as my saucepans, that naebody can clean but mysell."

"Well, my good friend," said Tyrrel, "the upshot of all this is, I hope, that I am to stay and have dinner here?"

"What for no?" replied Mrs. Dods.

"And that I am to have the Blue room for a night or two—perhaps longer?"

"I dinna ken that," said the dame.—"The Blue room is the best—and they that get neist best are no ill aff in this warld."

"Arrange it as you will," said the stranger, "I leave the whole matter to you, mistress.—Meantime, I will go see after my horse."

"The merciful man," said Meg, when her guest had left the kitchen, "is merciful to his beast.—He had aye something about him by ordinar, that callant—But eh, sirs! there is a sair change on his cheek-haffit since I saw him last!—He sall no want a good dinner for auld lang syne, that I'se engage for."

Meg set about the necessary preparations with all the natural energy of her disposition, which was so much exerted upon her culinary cares, that her two maids, on their return to the house, escaped the bitter reprimand which she had been previously conning over, in reward for their alleged slatternly negligence. Nay, so far did she carry her complaisance, that

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when Tyrrel crossed the kitchen to recover his saddle-bags, she formally rebuked Eppie for an idle taupie, for not carrying the gentleman's things to his room.

"I thank you, mistress," said Tyrrel; "but I have some drawings and colours in these saddle-bags, and I always like to carry them myself."

"Ay, and are you at the painting trade yet?" said Meg; "an unco slaister ye used to make with it lang syne."

"I cannot live without it," said Tyrrel; and, taking the saddle-bags, was formally inducted by the maid into a snug apartment, where he soon had the satisfaction to behold a capital dish of minced collops, with vegetables, and a jug of excellent ale, placed on the table by the careful hand of Meg herself. He could do no less, in acknowledgment of the honour, than ask Meg for a bottle of the yellow seal, "if there was any of that excellent claret still left."

"Left?—ay is there, walth of it," said Meg; "I dinna gie it to everybody—Ah! Maister Tirl, ye have not got ower your auld tricks!—I am sure, if ye are painting for your leeving, as you say, a little rum and water would come cheaper, and do ye as much good. But ye maun hae your ain way the day, nae doubt, if ye should never have it again."

Away trudged Meg, her keys clattering as she went, and, after much rummaging, returned with such a bottle of claret as no fashionable tavern could have produced, were it called for by a duke, or at a duke's price; and she seemed not a little gratified when her guest assured her that he had not yet forgotten its excellent flavour. She retired after these acts of hospitality, and left the stranger to enjoy in quiet the excellent matters which she had placed before him.

But there was that on Tyrrel's mind which defied the enlivening power of good cheer and of wine, which only maketh man's heart glad when that heart has no secret oppression to counteract its influence. Tyrrel found himself on a spot which he had loved in that delightful season, when youth and high spirits awaken all those flattering promises which are so ill kept to manhood. He drew his chair into the embrasure of the old-fashioned window, and throwing up the sash to enjoy the fresh air, suffered his thoughts to return to former days, while his eyes wandered over objects which they had not looked upon for several eventful years. He could behold beneath his eye the

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lower part of the decayed village, as its ruins peeped from the umbrageous shelter with which they were shrouded. Still lower down, upon the little holm which forms its churchyard, was seen the Kirk of St. Ronan's; and looking yet farther, towards the junction of St. Ronan's Burn with the river which traversed the larger dale or valley, he could see, whitened by the western sun, the rising houses, which were either newly finished, or in the act of being built, about the medicinal spring.

"Time changes all around us," such was the course of natural though trite reflection, which flowed upon Tyrrel's mind; "wherefore should loves and friendships have a longer date than our dwellings and our monuments?" As he indulged these sombre recollections, his officious landlady disturbed their tenor by her entrance.

"I was thinking to offer you a dish of tea, Maister Francie, just for the sake of auld lang syne, and I'll gar the quean Beenie bring it here, and mask it mysell.—But ye arena done with your wine yet?"

"I am indeed, Mrs. Dods," answered Tyrrel; "and I beg you will remove the bottle."

"Remove the bottle, and the wine no half drunk out!" said Meg, displeasure lowering on her brow; "I hope there is nae fault to be found wi' the wine, Maister Tirl?"

To this answer, which was put in a tone resembling defiance, Tyrrel submissively replied, by declaring "the claret not only unexceptionable, but excellent."

"And what for dinna ye drink it, then?" said Meg, sharply; "folk should never ask for mair liquor than they can mak a gude use of. Maybe ye think we have the fashion of the table-dot, as they ca' their new-fangled ordinary down-by yonder, where a' the bits of venegar cruets are put awa into an awmry, as they tell me, and ilk ane wi' the bit dribbles of syndings in it, and a paper about the neck o't, to show which of the customers is aught it—there they stand like doctor's drogs—and no an honest Scottish mutchkin will ane o' their viole haud, granting it were at the fouest."

"Perhaps," said Tyrrel, willing to indulge the spleen and prejudice of his old acquaintance, "perhaps the wine is not sc good as to make full measure desirable."

"Ye may say that, lad—and yet them that sell it might afford a gude penniworth, for they hae it for the making—

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maist feck of it ne'er saw France or Portugal. But as I was saying—this is no ane of their new-fangled places, where wine is put by for them that canna drink it—when the cork's drawn the bottle maun be drunk out—and what for no?—unless it be corkit."

"I agree entirely, Meg," said her guest; "but my ride to-day has somewhat heated me—and I think the dish of tea you promise me, will do me more good than to finish my bottle."

"Na, then, the best I can do for you is to put it by, to be sauce for the wild duck the morn; for I think ye said ye were to bide here for a day or twa."

"It is my very purpose, Meg, unquestionably," replied Tyrrel.

"Sae be it then," said Mrs. Dods; "and then the liquor's no lost—it has been seldom sic claret as that has simmered in a saucepan, let me tell you that, neighbour;—and I mind the day, when, headach or nae headach, ye wad hae been at the hinder-end of that bottle, and maybe anither, if ye could have gotten it wiled out of me. But then ye had your cousin to help you—Ah! he was a blithe bairn that Valentine Bulmer! —Ye were a canty callant too, Maister Francie, and muckle ado I had to keep ye baith in order when ye were on the ramble. But ye were a thought doucer than Valentine—But oh, he was a bonny laddie!—wi' een like diamonds, cheeks like roses, a head like a heathertap—he was the first I ever saw wear a crap, as they ca' it, but a' body cheats the barber now—and he had a laugh that wad hae raised the dead!—What wi' flyting on him, and what wi' laughing at him, there was nae minding ony other body when that Valentine was in the house.—And how is your cousin, Valentine Bulmer, Maister Francie?"

Tyrrel looked down, and only answered with a sigh.

"Ay—and is it even sae?" said Meg; "and has the puir bairn been sae soon removed frae this fashious warld?—Ay—ay—we maun a' gang ae gate—crackit quart-stoups and geisen'd barrels—leaky quaighs are we a', and canna keep in the liquor of life—Ohon, sirs!—Was the puir lad Bulmer frae Bu'mer Bay, where they land the Hollands, think ye, Maister Francie? —They whiles rin in a pickle tea there too—I hope that is good that I have made you, Maister Francie?"

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"Excellent, my good dame," said Tyrrel; but it was in a tone of voice which intimated that she had pressed upon a subject which awakened some unpleasant reflections.

"And when did this puir lad die?" continued Meg, who was not without her share of Eve's qualities, and wished to know something concerning what seemed to affect her guest so particularly; but he disappointed her purpose, and at the same time awakened another train of sentiment in her mind, by turning again to the window, and looking upon the distant buildings of St. Ronan's Well. As if he had observed for the first time these new objects, he said to Mistress Dods, in an indifferent tone, "You have got some gay new neighbours yonder, mistress."

"Neighbours," said Meg, her wrath beginning to arise, as it always did upon any allusion to this sore subject—"Ye may ca' them neighbours if ye like—but the deil flee awa wi' the neighbourhood for Meg Dods!"

"I suppose," said Tyrrel, as if he did not observe her displeasure, "that yonder is the Fox Hotel they told me of?"

"The Fox!" said Meg; "I am sure it is the fox that has carried off a' my geese.—I might shut up house, Maister Francie, if it was the thing I lived by—me that has seen a' our gentlefolks' bairns, and gien them snaps and sugar-biscuit maist of them wi' my ain hand! They wad hae seen my father's roof-tree fa' down and smoor me before they wad hae gien a boddle apiece to have propped it up—but they could a' link out their fifty pounds ower head to bigg a hottle at the Well yonder. And muckle they hae made o't—the bankrupt body, Sandie Lawson, hasna paid them a bawbee of four terms' rent."

"Surely, mistress, I think if the Well became so famous for its cures, the least the gentlemen could have done was to make you the priestess."

"Me priestess! I am nae Quaker, I wot, Maister Francie; and I never heard of alewife that turned preacher, except Luckie Buchan in the West.* And if I were to preach, I think I have mair the spirit of a Scottishwoman, than to preach in the very room they hae been dancing in ilka night in the week,

* The foundress of a sect called Buchanites; a species of Joanna Southcote, who long after death was expected to return and head her disciples on the road to Jerusalem.

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Saturday itsell not excepted, and that till twal o'clock at night. Na, na, Maister Francie; I leave the like o' that to Mr. Simon Chatterly, as they ca' the bit prelatical sprig of divinity from the town yonder, that plays at cards and dances six days in the week, and on the seventh reads the Common Prayer-book in the ball-room, with Tam Simson, the drunken barber, for his clerk."

"I think I have heard of Mr. Chatterly," said Tyrrel.

"Ye'll be thinking o' the sermon he has printed," said the angry dame, "where he compares their nasty puddle of a well yonder to the pool of Bethesda, like a foul-mouthed, fleeching, feather-headed fule as he is! He should hae kend that the place got a' its fame in the times of Black Popery; and though they pat it in St. Ronan's name, I'll never believe for one that the honest man had ony hand in it; for I hae been tell'd by ane that suld ken, that he was nae Roman, but only a Cuddie, or Culdee, or such like.—But will ye not take anither dish of tea, Maister Francie? and a wee bit of the diet-loaf, raised wi' my ain fresh butter, Maister Francie? and no wi' greasy kitchen-fee, like the seedcake down at the confectioner's yonder, that has as mony dead flees as carvey in it. Set him up for confectioner! Wi' a penniworth of rye-meal, and anither of tryacle, and twa or three carvey seeds, I will make better confections than ever cam out of his oven."

"I have no doubt of that, Mrs. Dods," said the guest; "and I only wish to know how these new comers were able to establish themselves against a house of such good reputation and old standing as yours?—It was the virtues of the mineral, I daresay; but how came the waters to recover a character all at once, mistress?"

"I dinna ken, sir—they used to be thought good for naething, but here and there for a puir body's bairn, that had gotten the cruells,* and could not afford a penniworth of salts. But my Leddy Penelope Penfeather had fa'an ill, it's like, as nae other body had ever fell ill, and sae she was to be cured some gate naebody was ever cured, which was naething mair than was reasonable—and my leddy, ye ken, has wit at wull, and has a' the wise folk out from Edinburgh at her house at Windywa's yonder, which it is her leddyship's will and pleasure to call Air Castle—and they have a' their different turns, and

* *Escrouelles*, King's evil.

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some can clink verses, wi' their tale, as weel as Rob Burns or Allan Ramsay—and some rin up hill and down dale, knapping the chucky stanes to pieces wi' hammers, like sae mony road-makers run daft—they sae it is to see how the warld was made!—and some that play on all manner of ten-stringed instruments—and a wheen sketching souls, that ye may see perched like craws on every craig in the country, e'en working at your ain trade, Maister Francie; forby men that had been in foreign parts, or said they had been there, whilk is a' ane, ye ken, and maybe twa or three draggle-tailed misses, that wear my Leddy Penelope's follies when she has dune wi' them, as her queans of maids wear her second-hand claithes. So, after her leddyship's happy recovery, as they ca'd it, down cam the haill tribe of wild geese, and settled by the Well, to dine thereout on the bare grund, like a wheen tinklers; and they had sangs, and tunes, and healths, nae doubt, in praise of the fountain, as they ca'd the Well, and of Leddy Penelope Penfeather; and, lastly, they behoved a' to take a solemn bumper of the spring, which, as I am tauld, made unco havoc among them or they wan hame; and this they ca'd Picknick, and a plague to them! And sae the jig was begun after her leddyship's pipe, and mony a mad measure has been danced sin' syne; for down cam masons and murgeon-makers, and preachers and player-folk, and Episcopalians and Methodists, and fools and fiddlers, and Papists and piebakers, and doctors and drugsters; by the shop-folk, that sell trash and trumpery at three prices—and so up got the bonny new Well, and down fell the honest auld town of St. Ronan's, where blithe decent folk had been heartsome eneugh for mony a day before ony o' them were born, or ony sic vapouring fancies kittled in their cracked brains."

"What said your landlord, the Laird of St. Ronan's, to all this?" said Tyrrel.

"Is't *my* landlord ye are asking after, Maister Francie?—the Laird of St. Ronan's is nae landlord of mine, and I think ye might hae minded that.—Na, na, thanks be to Praise! Meg Dods is baith land*lord* and land*leddy*. Ill eneugh to keep the doors open as it is, let be facing Whitsunday and Martinmas—an auld leather pock there is, Maister Francie, in ane of worthy Maister Bindloose the sheriff-clerk's pigeon-holes, in his dowcot of a closet in the burgh; and therein is baith charter,

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and sasine, and special service to boot; and that will be chapter and verse, speer when ye list."

"I had quite forgotten," said Tyrrel, "that the inn was your own; though I remember you were a considerable landed proprietor."

"Maybe I am," replied Meg, "maybe I am not; and if I be, what for no?—But as to what the Laird, whose grandfather was my father's landlord, said to the new doings yonder—he just jumped at the ready penny, like a cock at a grossart, and feu'd the bonny holm beside the Well, that they ca'd Saints-Well-holm, that was like the best land in his aught, to be carved, and biggit, and howkit up, just at the pleasure of Jock Ashler the stane-mason, that ca's himsell an arkiteck—there's nae living for new words in this new warld neither, and that is another vex to auld folk such as me—It's a shame o' the young Laird to let his auld patrimony gang the gate it's like to gang, and my heart is sair to see't, though it has but little cause to care what comes of him or his."

"Is it the same Mr. Mowbray," said Mr. Tyrrel, "who still holds the estate?—the old gentleman, you know, whom I had some dispute with"——

"About hunting moor-fowl upon the Spring-well-head muirs?" said Meg. "Ah, lad! honest Maister Bindloose brought you neatly off there—Na, it's no that honest man, but his son John Mowbray—the tother has slept down-by in St. Ronan's Kirk for these six or seven years."

"Did he leave," asked Tyrrel, with something of a faltering voice, "no other child than the present laird?"

"No other son," said Meg; "and there's e'en eneugh, unless he could have left a better ane."

"He died, then," said Tyrrel, "excepting this son, without children?"

"By your leave, no," said Meg; "there is the lassie Miss Clara, that keeps house for the laird, if it can be ca'd keeping house, for he is almost aye down at the Well yonder—so a sma' kitchen serves them at the Shaws."

"Miss Clara will have but a dull time of it there during her brother's absence," said the stranger.

"Hoot no!—he has her aften jinketing about, and back and forward, wi' a' the fine flichtering fools that come yonder; and clapping palms wi' them, and linking at their dances and

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daffings. I wuss nae ill come o't, but it's a shame her father's daughter should keep company wi' a' that scauff and raff of physic-students, and writers' prentices, and bagmen, and siclike trash as are down at the Well yonder."

"You are severe, Mrs. Dods," replied the guest. "No doubt Miss Clara's conduct deserves all sort of freedom."

"I am saying naething against her conduct," said the dame; "and there's nae ground to say onything that I ken of—But I wad hae like draw to like, Maister Francie. I never quarrelled the ball that the gentry used to hae at my bit house a gude wheen years bygane—when they came, the auld folk in their coaches, wi' lang-tailed black horses, and a wheen galliard gallants on their hunting horses, and mony a decent leddy behind her ain goodman, and mony a bonny smirking lassie on her pownie, and wha sae happy as they—And what for no? And then there was the farmers' ball, wi' the tight lads of yeomen with the brank new blues and the buckskins—These were decent meetings—but then they were a' ae man's bairns that were at them, ilk ane kend ilk other—they danced farmers wi' farmers' daughters, at the tane, and gentles wi' gentle blood at the tother, unless maybe when some of the gentlemen of the Killnakelty Club would gie me a round of the floor mysell, in the way of daffing and fun, and me no able to flyte on them for laughing—I am sure I never grudged these innocent pleasures, although it has cost me maybe a week's redding up, ere I got the better of the confusion."

"But, dame," said Tyrrel, "this ceremonial would be a little hard upon strangers like myself, for how were we to find partners in these family parties of yours?"

"Never you fash your thumb about that, Maister Francie," returned the landlady, with a knowing wink—"Every Jack will find a Jill, gang the world as it may—and, at the warst o't, better hae some fashery in finding a partner for the night, than get yoked with ane that you may not be able to shake off the morn."

"And does that sometimes happen?" asked the stranger.

"Happen!—and is't amang the Well folk that ye mean?" exclaimed the hostess. "Was it not the last season, as they ca't, no farther gane, that young Sir Bingo Binks, the English lad wi' the red coat, that keeps a mail-coach, and drives it himsell, gat cleekit with Miss Rachel Bonnyrigg, the auld Leddy

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Loupengirth's lang-legged daughter—and they danced sae lang thegither, that there was mair said than suld hae been said about it—and the lad would fain have louped back, but the auld leddy held him to his tackle, and the Commissary Court and somebody else made her Leddy Binks in spite of Sir Bingo's heart—and he has never daured take her to his friends in England, but they have just wintered and summered it at the Well ever since—and that is what the Well is good for!"

"And does Clara,—I mean does Miss Mowbray, keep company with such women as these?" said Tyrrel, with a tone of interest which he checked as he proceeded with the question.

"What can she do, puir thing?" said the dame. "She maun keep the company that her brother keeps, for she is clearly dependent.—But, speaking of that, I ken what *I* have to do, and that is no little, before it darkens. I have sat clavering with you ower lang, Maister Francie."

And away she marched with a resolved step, and soon the clear octaves of her voice were heard in shrill admonition to her hand-maidens.

Tyrrel paused a moment in deep thought, then took his hat, paid a visit to the stable, where his horse saluted him with feathering ears, and that low amicable neigh, with which that animal acknowledges the approach of a loving and beloved friend. Having seen that the faithful creature was in every respect attended to, Tyrrel availed himself of the continued and lingering twilight, to visit the old castle, which, upon former occasions, had been his favourite evening walk. He remained while the light permitted, admiring the prospect we attempted to describe in the first chapter, and comparing, as in his former reverie, the faded hues of the glimmering landscape to those of human life, when early youth and hope had ceased to gild them.

A brisk walk to the inn, and a light supper on a Welsh rabbit and the dame's home-brewed, were stimulants of livelier, at least more resigned thoughts—and the Blue bedroom, to the honour of which he had been promoted, received him a contented, if not a cheerful tenant.

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CHAPTER THIRD.

ADMINISTRATION.

There must be government in all society—
Bees have their Queen, and stag herds have their leader;
Rome had her Consuls, Athens had her Archons,
And we, sir, have our Managing Committee.

THE ALBUM OF ST. RONAN'S.

FRANCIS TYRREL was, in the course of the next day, formally settled in his own old quarters, where he announced his purpose of remaining for several days. The old-established carrier of the place brought his fishing-rod and travelling-trunk, with a letter to Meg, dated a week previously, desiring her to prepare to receive an old acquaintance. This annunciation, though something of the latest, Meg received with great complacency, observing, it was a civil attention in Maister Tirl; and that John Hislop, though he was not just sae fast, was far surer than ony post of them a', or express either. She also observed with satisfaction, that there was no gun-case along with her guest's baggage; "for that weary gunning had brought him and her into trouble—the lairds had cried out upon't, as if she made her house a howff for common fowlers and poachers; and yet how could she hinder twa daft hempie callants from taking a start and an ower-loup?* They had been ower the neighbour's ground they had leave on up to the march, and they werena just to ken meiths when the moorfowl got up."

In a day or two her guest fell into such quiet and solitary habits, that Meg, herself the most restless and bustling of human creatures, began to be vexed, for want of the trouble which she expected to have had with him, experiencing, perhaps, the same sort of feeling from his extreme and passive indifference on all points, that a good horseman has for the over-patient steed, which he can scarce feel under him. His walks were devoted to the most solitary recesses among the neighbouring woods and hills—his fishing-rod was often left behind him, or carried merely as an apology for sauntering slowly by the banks of some little brooklet—and his success so indifferent, that Meg

* The usual expression for a slight encroachment on a neighbour's property.

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said the piper of Peebles* would have caught a creelfu' before Maister Francie had made out the half-dozen; so that he was obliged, for peace's sake, to vindicate his character, by killing a handsome salmon.

Tyrrel's painting, as Meg called it, went on equally slowly: He often, indeed, showed her the sketches which he brought from his walks, and used to finish at home; but Meg held them very cheap. What signified, she said, a wheen bits of paper, wi' black and white scarts upon them, that he ca'd bushes, and trees, and craigs?—Couldna he paint them wi' green, and blue, and yellow, like the other folk? "Ye will never mak your bread that way, Maister Francie. Ye suld munt up a muckle square of canvas like Dick Tinto, and paint folk's ainsells, that they like muckle better to see than ony craig in the haill water; and I wadna muckle objeck even to some of the Wallers coming up and sitting to ye. They waste their time waur, I wis—and, I warrant, ye might mak a guinea a-head of them. Dick made twa, but he was an auld used hand, and folk maun creep before they gang."

In answer to these remonstrances, Tyrrel assured her that the sketches with which he busied himself were held of such considerable value, that very often an artist in that line received much higher remuneration for these than for portraits or coloured drawings. He added, that they were often taken for the purpose of illustrating popular poems, and hinted as if he himself were engaged in some labour of that nature.

Eagerly did Meg long to pour forth to Nelly Trotter, the fish-woman,—whose cart formed the only neutral channel of communication between the Auld Town and the Well, and who was in favour with Meg, because, as Nelly passed her door on her way to the Well, she always had the first choice of her fish,—the merits of her lodger as an artist. Luckie Dods had, in truth, been so much annoyed and bullied, as it were, with the report of clever persons, accomplished in all sorts of excellence, arriving day after day at the Hotel, that she was overjoyed in this fortunate opportunity to triumph over them in their own way; and it may be believed, that the excellences of her lodger lost nothing by being trumpeted through her mouth.

"I maun hae the best of the cart, Nelly—if you and me can gree—for it is for ane of the best of painters. Your fine folk

* The said piper was famous at the mystery.

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down yonder would gie their lugs to look at what he has been doing—he gets gowd in gowpins, for three downright scarts and three cross anes—And he is no an ungrateful loon, like Dick Tinto, that had nae sooner my good five-and-twenty shillings in his pocket, than he gaed down to birl it awa at their bonny hottle yonder, but a decent quiet lad, that kens when he is weel aff, and bides still at the auld howff—And what for no? —Tell them all this, and hear what they will say till't."

Indeed, mistress, I can tell ye that already, without stirring my shanks for the matter," answered Nelly Trotter; "they will e'en say that ye are ae auld fule and me anither, that may hae some judgment in cock-bree or in scate-rumples, but maunna fash our beards about onything else."

"Wad they say sae, the frontless villains? and me been a housekeeper this thirty year!" exclaimed Meg; "I wadna hae them say it to my face! But I am no speaking without warrant —for what an I had spoken to the minister, lass, and shown him ane of the loose scarts of paper that Maister Tirl leaves fleeing about his room?—and what an he had said he had kend Lord Bidmore gie five guineas for the waur on't? and a' the warld kens he was lang tutor in the Bidmore family."

"Troth," answered her gossip, "I doubt if I was to tell a' this they would hardly believe me, mistress; for there are sae mony judges amang them, and they think sae muckle of themsells, and sae little of other folk, that unless ye were to send down the bit picture, I am no thinking they will believe a word that I can tell them."

"No believe what an honest woman says—let abee to say twa o' them?" exclaimed Meg; "Oh the unbelieving generation!—Weel, Nelly, since my back is up, ye sall tak down the picture, or sketching, or whatever it is (though I thought sketchers* were aye made of airn), and shame wi' it the conceited crew that they are.—But see and bring't back wi' ye again, Nelly, for it's a thing of value; and trustna it out o' your hand, *that* I charge you, for I lippen no muckle to their honesty.—And, Nelly, ye may tell them he has an illustrated poem—*illustrated*—mind the word, Nelly—that is to be stuck as fou of the like o' that, as ever turkey was larded wi' dabs o' bacon."

Thus furnished with her credentials, and acting the part of a

* Skates are called sketchers in Scotland.

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herald betwixt two hostile countries, honest Nelly switched her little fish-cart downwards to St. Ronan's Well.

In watering-places, as in other congregated assemblies of the human species, various kinds of government have been dictated, by chance, caprice, or convenience; but in almost all of them, some sort of direction has been adopted, to prevent the consequences of anarchy. Sometimes the sole power has been vested in a Master of Ceremonies; but this, like other despotisms, has been of late unfashionable, and the powers of this great officer have been much limited even at Bath, where Nash once ruled with undisputed supremacy. Committees of management, chosen from among the most steady guests, have been in general resorted to as a more liberal mode of sway, and to such was confided the administration of the infant republic of St. Ronan's Well. This little senate, it must be observed, had the more difficult task in discharging their high duties, that, like those of other republics, their subjects were divided into two jarring and contending factions, who every day ate, drank, danced, and made merry together, hating each other all the while with all the animosity of political party, endeavouring, by every art, to secure the adherence of each guest who arrived, and ridiculing the absurdities and follies of each other, with all the wit and bitterness of which they were masters.

At the head of one of these parties was no less a personage than Lady Penelope Penfeather, to whom the establishment owed its fame, nay, its existence; and whose influence could only have been balanced by that of the Lord of the Manor, Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's, or, as he was called usually by the company who affected what Meg called knapping English, the Squire, who was leader of the opposite faction.

The rank and fortune of the lady, her pretensions to beauty as well as talent (though the former was something faded), and the consequence which she arrogated to herself as a woman of fashion, drew round her painters, and poets, and philosophers, and men of science, and lecturers, and foreign adventurers, *et hoc genus omne.*

On the contrary, the Squire's influence, as a man of family and property in the immediate neighbourhood, who actually kept greyhounds and pointers, and at least talked of hunters and of racers, ascertained him the support of the whole class of bucks, half and whole bred, from the three next counties; and if more

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inducements were wanting, he could grant his favourites the privilege of shooting over his moors, which is enough to turn the head of a young Scottishman at any time. Mr. Mowbray was of late especially supported in his pre-eminence by a close alliance with Sir Bingo Binks, a sapient English Baronet, who, ashamed, as many thought, to return to his own country, had set him down at the Well of St. Ronan's, to enjoy the blessing which the Caledonian Hymen had so kindly forced on him, in the person of Miss Rachel Bonnyrigg. As this gentleman actually drove a regular-built mail-coach, not in any respect differing from that of his Majesty, only that it was more frequently overturned, his influence with a certain set was irresistible, and the Squire of St. Ronan's, having the better sense of the two, contrived to reap the full benefit of the consequence attached to his friendship.

These two contending parties were so equally balanced, that the predominance of the influence of either was often determined by the course of the sun. Thus, in the morning and forenoon, when Lady Penelope led forth her herd to lawn and shady bower, whether to visit some ruined monument of ancient times, or eat their pic-nic luncheon, to spoil good paper with bad drawings, and good verses with repetition—in a word,

"To rave, recite, and madden round the land,"

her ladyship's empire over the loungers seemed uncontrolled and absolute, and all things were engaged in the *tourbillon*, of which she formed the pivot and centre. Even the hunters, and shooters, and hard drinkers, were sometimes fain reluctantly to follow in her train, sulking, and quizzing, and flouting at her solemn festivals, besides encouraging the younger nymphs to giggle when they should have looked sentimental. But after dinner the scene was changed, and her ladyship's sweetest smiles, and softest invitations, were often insufficient to draw the neutral part of the company to the tea-room; so that her society was reduced to those whose constitution or finances rendered early retirement from the dining-parlour a matter of convenience, together with the more devoted and zealous of her own immediate dependants and adherents. Even the faith of the latter was apt to be debauched. Her ladyship's poet-laureate, in whose behalf she was teasing each new-comer for subscriptions, got sufficiently independent to sing in her lady-

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ship's presence, at supper, a song of rather equivocal meaning; and her chief painter, who was employed upon an illustrated copy of the Loves of the Plants, was, at another time, seduced into such a state of pot-valour, that, upon her ladyship's administering her usual dose of criticism upon his works, he not only bluntly disputed her judgment, but talked something of his right to be treated like a gentleman.

These feuds were taken up by the Managing Committee, who interceded for the penitent offenders on the following morning, and obtained their re-establishment in Lady Penelope's good graces upon moderate terms. Many other acts of moderating authority they performed, much to the assuaging of faction, and the quiet of the Wellers; and so essential was their government to the prosperity of the place, that, without them, St. Ronan's spring would probably have been speedily deserted. We must, therefore, give a brief sketch of that potential Committee, which both factions, acting as if on a self-denying ordinance, had combined to invest with the reins of government.

Each of its members appeared to be selected, as Fortunio, in the fairy-tale, chose his followers, for his peculiar gifts. First on the list stood the MAN OF MEDICINE, Dr. Quentin Quackleben, who claimed right to regulate medical matters at the spring, upon the principle which, of old, assigned the property of a newly-discovered country to the bucanier who committed the earliest piracy on its shores. The acknowledgment of the Doctor's merit, as having been first to proclaim and vindicate the merits of these healing fountains, had occasioned his being universally installed First Physician and Man of Science, which last qualification he could apply to all purposes, from the boiling of an egg to the giving a lecture. He was, indeed, qualified, like many of his profession, to spread both the bane and antidote before a dyspeptic patient, being as knowing a gastronome as Dr. Redgill himself, or any other worthy physician who has written for the benefit of the *cuisine*, from Dr. Moncrieff of Tippermalloch, to the late Dr. Hunter of York, and the present Dr. Kitchiner of London. But pluralities are always invidious, and therefore the Doctor prudently relinquished the office of caterer and head-carver to the Man of Taste, who occupied regularly, and *ex officio*, the head of the table, reserving to himself the occasional privilege of criticising, and a principal share in consuming, the good things which the common entertainment

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afforded. We have only to sum up this brief account of the learned Doctor, by informing the reader that he was a tall, lean, beetlebrowed man, with an ill-made black scratch-wig, that stared out on either side from his lantern jaws. He resided nine months out of the twelve at St. Ronan's, and was supposed to make an indifferent good thing of it, especially as he played whist to admiration.

First in place, though perhaps second to the Doctor in real authority, was Mr. Winterblossom; a civil sort of person, who was nicely precise in his address, wore his hair cued, and dressed with powder, had knee-buckles set with Bristol stones, and a seal-ring as large as Sir John Falstaff's. In his heyday he had a small estate, which he had spent like a gentleman, by mixing with the gay world. He was, in short, one of those respectable links that connect the coxcombs of the present day with those of the last age, and could compare, in his own experience, the follies of both. In latter days, he had sense enough to extricate himself from his course of dissipation, though with impaired health and impoverished fortune.

Mr. Winterblossom now lived upon a moderate annuity, and had discovered a way of reconciling his economy with much company and made dishes, by acting as perpetual president of the table-d'hôte at the Well. Here he used to amuse the society by telling stories about Garrick, Foote, Bonnel Thornton, and Lord Kelly, and delivering his opinions in matters of taste and vertu. An excellent carver, he knew how to help each guest to what was precisely his due; and never failed to reserve a proper slice as the reward of his own labours. To conclude, he was possessed of some taste in the fine arts, at least in painting and music, although it was rather of the technical kind, than that which warms the heart and elevates the feelings. There was indeed, about Winterblossom, nothing that was either warm or elevated. He was shrewd, selfish, and sensual; the last two of which qualities he screened from observation, under a specious varnish of exterior complaisance. Therefore, in his professed and apparent anxiety to do the honours of the table, to the most punctilious point of good breeding, he never permitted the attendants upon the public taste to supply the wants of others, until all his own private comforts had been fully arranged and provided for.

Mr. Winterblossom was also distinguished for possessing a

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few curious engravings, and other specimens of art, with the exhibition of which he occasionally beguiled a wet morning at the public room. They were collected, "*viis et modis*," said the Man of Law, another distinguished member of the Committee, with a knowing cock of his eye to his next neighbour.

Of this person little need be said. He was a large-boned, loud-voiced, red-faced old man, named Meiklewham; a country writer, or attorney, who managed the matters of the Squire much to the profit of one or other,—if not of both. His nose projected from the front of his broad vulgar face, like the style of an old sun-dial, twisted all of one side. He was as great a bully in his profession, as if it had been military instead of civil; conducted the whole technicalities concerning the cutting up the Saint's-Wellhaugh, so much lamented by Dame Dods, into building-stances, and was on excellent terms with Doctor Quackleben, who always recommended him to make the wills of his patients.

After the Man of Law comes Captain Hector MacTurk, a Highland lieutenant on half-pay, and that of ancient standing; one who preferred toddy of the strongest to wine, and in that fashion and cold drams finished about a bottle of whisky *per diem*, whenever he could come by it. He was called the Man of Peace, on the same principle which assigns to constables, Bow-street runners, and such like, who carry bludgeons to break folk's heads, and are perpetually and officially employed in scenes of riot, the title of peace-officers—that is, because by his valour he compelled others to act with discretion. The Captain was the general referee in all those abortive quarrels, which at a place of this kind are so apt to occur at night, and to be quietly settled in the morning; and occasionally adopted a quarrel himself, by way of taking down any guest who was unusually pugnacious. This occupation procured Captain MacTurk a good deal of respect at the Well; for he was precisely that sort of person who is ready to fight with any one—whom no one can find an apology for declining to fight with,—in fighting with whom considerable danger was incurred, for he was ever and anon showing that he could snuff a candle with a pistol-ball,—and lastly, through fighting with whom no éclat or credit could redound to the antagonist. He always wore a blue coat and red collar, had a supercilious taciturnity of

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manner, ate sliced leeks with his cheese, and resembled in complexion a Dutch red-herring.

Still remains to be mentioned the Man of Religion—the gentle Mr. Simon Chatterly, who had strayed to St. Ronan's Well from the banks of Cam or Isis, and who piqued himself, first on his Greek, and secondly, on his politeness to the ladies. During all the week days, as Dame Dods has already hinted, this reverend gentleman was the partner at the whist-table, or in the ball-room, to what maid or matron soever lacked a partner at either; and on the Sundays, he read prayers in the public room to all who chose to attend. He was also a deviser of charades, and an unriddler of riddles; he played a little on the flute, and was Mr. Winterblossom's principal assistant in contriving those ingenious and romantic paths, by which, as by the zig-zags which connect military parallels, you were enabled to ascend to the top of the hill behind the hotel, which commands so beautiful a prospect, at exactly that precise angle of ascent, which entitles a gentleman to offer his arm, and a lady to accept it, with perfect propriety.

There was yet another member of this Select Committee, Mr. Michael Meredith, who might be termed the Man of Mirth, or, if you please, the Jack Pudding to the company, whose business it was to crack the best joke, and sing the best song—he could. Unluckily, however, this functionary was for the present obliged to absent himself from St. Ronan's; for, not recollecting that he did not actually wear the privileged motley of his profession, he had passed some jest upon Captain MacTurk, which cut so much to the quick, that Mr. Meredith was fain to go to goat-whey quarters, at some ten miles' distance, and remain there in a sort of concealment, until the affair should be made up through the mediation of his brethren of the Committee.

Such were the honest gentlemen who managed the affairs of this rising settlement, with as much impartiality as could be expected. They were not indeed without their own secret predilections; for the lawyer and the soldier privately inclined to the party of the Squire, while the parson, Mr. Meredith, and Mr. Winterblossom, were more devoted to the interests of Lady Penelope; so that Dr. Quackleben alone, who probably recollected that the gentlemen were as liable to stomach complaints, as the ladies to nervous disorders, seemed the only person who preserved in word and deed the most rigid neutral-

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ity. Nevertheless, the interests of the establishment being very much at the heart of this honourable council, and each feeling his own profit, pleasure, or comfort, in some degree involved, they suffered not their private affections to interfere with their public duties, but acted, every one in his own sphere, for the public benefit of the whole community.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

THE INVITATION.

Thus painters write their names at Co.
PRIOR.

THE clamour which attends the removal of dinner from a public room had subsided; the clatter of plates, and knives, and forks—the bustling tread of awkward boobies of country servants, kicking each other's shins, and wrangling as they endeavour to rush out of the door three abreast—the clash of glasses and tumblers, borne to earth in the tumult—the shrieks of the landlady—the curses, not loud, but deep, of the landlord—had all passed away; and those of the company who had servants had been accommodated by their respective Ganymedes with such remnants of their respective bottles of wine, spirits, etc., as the said Ganymedes had not previously consumed, while the rest, broken in to such observance by Mr. Winterblossom, waited patiently until the worthy president's own special and multifarious commissions had been executed by a tidy young woman and a lumpish lad, the regular attendants belonging to the house, but whom he permitted to wait on no one, till, as the hymn says,

"All his wants were well supplied."

"And, Dinah—my bottle of pale sherry, Dinah—place it on this side—there is a good girl;—and, Toby—get my jug with the hot water—and let it be boiling—and don't spill it on Lady Penelope, if you can help it, Toby."

"No—for her ladyship has been in hot water to-day already," said the Squire; a sarcasm to which Lady Penelope only replied with a look of contempt.

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"And, Dinah, bring the sugar—the soft East India sugar, Dinah—and a lemon, Dinah, one of those which came fresh to-day—Go fetch it from the bar, Toby—and don't tumble down stairs, if you can help it —And, Dinah—stay, Dinah—the nutmeg, Dinah, and the ginger, my good girl—And, Dinah—put the cushion up behind my back—and the footstool to my foot, for my toe is something the worse of my walk with your ladyship this morning to the top of Belvidere."

"Her ladyship may call it what she pleases in common parlance," said the writer; "but it must stand Munt-grunzie in the stamped paper, being so nominated in the ancient writs and evidents thereof."

"And, Dinah," continued the president, "lift up my handkerchief—and—a bit of biscuit, Dinah—and—and I do not think I want anything else—Look to the company, my good girl.—I have the honour to drink the company's very good health—Will your ladyship honour me by accepting a glass of negus?—I learned to make negus from old Dartineuf's son.—He always used East India sugar, and added a tamarind—It improves the flavour infinitely.—Dinah, see your father sends for some tamarinds—Dartineuf knew a good thing almost as well as his father—I met him at Bath in the year—let me see—Garrick was just taking leave, and that was in," etc. etc. etc.—"And what is this now, Dinah?" he said, as she put into his hand a roll of paper.

"Something that Nelly Trotter" (Trotting Nelly, as the company called her) "brought from a sketching gentleman that lives at the woman's" (thus bluntly did the upstart minx describe the reverend Mrs. Margaret Dods) "at the Cleikum of Aultoun yonder"—A name, by the way, which the inn had acquired from the use which the saint upon the sign-post was making of his pastoral crook.

"Indeed, Dinah?" said Mr. Winterblossom, gravely taking out his spectacles, and wiping them before he opened the roll of paper; "some boy's daubing, I suppose, whose pa and ma wish to get him into the Trustees' School, and so are beating about for a little interest.—But I am drained dry—I put three lads in last season; and if it had not been my particular interest with the secretary, who asks my opinion now and then, I could not have managed it. But giff gaff, say I.—Eh! What, in the devil's name, is this?—Here is both force and keeping—

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"Eh! what in the devil's name, is this?—Here is both force and keeping—Who can this be, my lady?—Do but see the sky-line—why, this is really a little bit—an exquisite little bit."—PAGE 45.

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Who can this be, my lady?—Do but see the sky-line—why, this is really a little bit—an exquisite little bit—Who the devil can it be? and how can he have stumbled upon the dog-hole in the Old Town, and the snarling b—— I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons—that kennels there?"

"I dare say, my lady," said a little miss of fourteen, her eyes growing rounder and rounder, and her cheeks redder and redder, as she found herself speaking, and so many folks listening—"Oh, la! I dare say it is the same gentleman we met one day in the Low-wood walk, that looked like a gentleman, and yet was none of the company, and that you said was a handsome man."

"I did not say handsome, Maria," replied her ladyship; "ladies never say men are handsome—I only said he looked genteel and interesting."

"And that, my lady," said the young parson, bowing and smiling, "is, I will be judged by the company, the more flattering compliment of the two—We shall be jealous of this Unknown presently."

"Nay, but," continued the sweetly communicative Maria, with some real and some assumed simplicity, "your ladyship forgets—for you said presently after, you were sure he was no gentleman, for he did not run after you with your glove which you had dropped—and so I went back myself to find your ladyship's glove, and he never offered to help me, and I saw him closer than your ladyship did, and I am sure he is handsome, though he is not very civil."

"You speak a little too much and too loud, miss," said Lady Penelope, a natural blush reinforcing the *nuance* of rouge by which it was usually superseded.

"What say you to that, Squire Mowbray?" said the elegant Sir Bingo Binks.

"A fair challenge to the field, Sir Bingo," answered the Squire; "when a lady throws down the gauntlet, a gentleman may throw the handkerchief."

"I have always the benefit of *your* best construction, Mr. Mowbray," said the lady, with dignity. "I suppose Miss Maria has contrived this pretty story for your amusement. I can hardly answer to Mr. Digges, for bringing her into company where she receives encouragement to behave so."

"Nay, nay, my lady," said the president, "you must let the

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jest pass by; and since this is really such an admirable sketch, you must honour us with your opinion, whether the company can consistently with propriety make any advances to this man."

"In my opinion," said her ladyship, the angry spot still glowing on her brow, "there are enough of *men* among us already—I wish I could say gentlemen—As matters stand, I see little business *ladies* can have at St. Ronan's."

This was an intimation which always brought the Squire back to good breeding, which he could make use of when he pleased. He deprecated her ladyship's displeasure, until she told him, in returning good-humour, that she really would not trust him unless he brought his sister to be security for his future politeness.

"Clara, my lady," said Mowbray, "is a little wilful; and I believe your ladyship must take the task of unharbouring her into your own hands. What say you to a gipsy party up to my old shop?—It is a bachelor's house—you must not expect things in much order; but Clara would be honoured"——

The Lady Penelope eagerly accepted the proposal of something like a party, and, quite reconciled with Mowbray, began to inquire whether she might bring the stranger artist with her, "that is," said her ladyship, looking to Dinah, "if he be a gentleman."

Here Dinah interposed her assurance, "that the gentleman at Meg Dods's was quite and clean a gentleman, and an illustrated poet besides."

"An illustrated poet, Dinah?" said Lady Penelope; "you must mean an illustrious poet."

"I dare to say your ladyship is right," said Dinah, dropping a courtesy.

A joyous flutter of impatient anxiety was instantly excited through all the blue-stocking faction of the company, nor were the news totally indifferent to the rest of the community. The former belonged to that class, who, like the young Ascanius, are ever beating about in quest of a tawny lion, though they are much more successful in now and then starting a great bore;* and the others, having left all their own ordinary affairs and

* The one or the other was equally *in votis* to Ascanius,—

"Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem."

Modern Trojans make a great distinction betwixt these two objects of chase.

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subjects of interest at home, were glad to make a matter of importance of the most trivial occurrence. A mighty poet, said the former class—who could it possibly be?—All names were recited—all Britain scrutinised, from Highland hills to the Lakes of Cumberland—from Sydenham Common to St. James's Place—even the Banks of the Bosphorus were explored for some name which might rank under this distinguished epithet.—And then, besides his illustrious poesy, to sketch so inimitably!—who *could* it be? And all the gapers, who had nothing of their own to suggest, answered with the antistrophe, "Who could it be?"

The Claret Club, which comprised the choicest and firmest adherents of Squire Mowbray and the Baronet—men who scorned that the reversion of one bottle of wine should furnish forth the feast of to-morrow, though caring nought about either of the fine arts in question, found out an interest of their own, which centred in the same individual.

"I say, little Sir Bingo," said the Squire, "this is the very fellow that we saw down at the Willow-slack on Saturday—he was tog'd gnostically enough, and cast twelve yards of line with one hand—the fly fell like a thistledown on the water."

"Uich!" answered the party he addressed, in the accents of a dog choking in the collar.

"We saw him pull out the salmon yonder," said Mowbray; "you remember—clean fish—the tideticks on his gills—weighed, I dare say, a matter of eighteen pounds."

"Sixteen!" replied Sir Bingo, in the same tone of strangulation.

"None of your rigs, Bing!" said his companion, "nearer eighteen than sixteen!"

"Nearer sixteen, by ——!"

"Will you go a dozen of blue on it to the company?" said the Squire.

"No, d—me!" croaked the Baronet—"to our own set I will."

"Then I say done!" quoth the Squire.

And "Done!" responded the Knight; and out came their red pocket-books.

"But who shall decide the bet?" said the Squire. "The genius himself I suppose; they talk of asking him here, but I suppose he will scarce mind quizzes like them."

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"Write myself—John Mowbray," said the Baronet.

"You, Baronet!—you write!" answered the Squire, "d—me, that cock won't fight—you won't."

"I will," growled Sir Bingo, more articulately than usual.

"Why, you can't!" said Mowbray. "You never wrote a line in your life, save those you were whipped for at school."

"I can write—I will write!" said Sir Bingo. "Two to one I will."

And there the affair rested, for the council of the company were in high consultation concerning the most proper manner of opening a communication with the mysterious stranger; and the voice of Mr. Winterblossom, whose tones, originally fine, age had reduced to falsetto, was calling upon the whole party for "Order, order!" So that the bucks were obliged to lounge in silence, with both arms reclined on the table, and testifying, by coughs and yawns, their indifference to the matters in question, while the rest of the company debated upon them, as if they were matters of life and death.

"A visit from one of the gentlemen—Mr. Winterblossom, if he would take the trouble—in name of the company at large—would, Lady Penelope Penfeather presumed to think, be a necessary preliminary to an invitation."

Mr. Winterblossom was "quite of her ladyship's opinion, and would gladly have been the personal representative of the company at St. Ronan's Well—but it was up hill—her ladyship knew his tyrant, the gout, was hovering upon the frontiers—there were other gentlemen, younger, and more worthy to fly at the lady's command than an ancient Vulcan like him—there was the valiant Mars and the eloquent Mercury."

Thus speaking, he bowed to Captain MacTurk and the Rev. Mr. Simon Chatterly, and reclined on his chair, sipping his negus with the self-satisfied smile of one who, by a pretty speech, has rid himself of a troublesome commission. At the same time, by an act probably of mental absence, he put in his pocket the drawing, which, after circulating around the table, had returned back to the chair of the president, being the point from which it had set out.

"By Cot, madam," said Captain MacTurk, "I should be proud to obey your leddyship's commands—but, by Cot, I never call first on any man that never called upon me at all, unless it were to carry him a friend's message, or such like."

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"Twig the old connoisseur," said the Squire to the Knight. —"He is condiddling the drawing."

"Go it, Johnnie Mowbray—pour it into him," whispered Sir Bingo.

"Thank ye for nothing, Sir Bingo," said the Squire, in the same tone. "Winterblossom is one of us—*was* one of us at least—and won't stand the ironing. He has his Wogdens still, that were right things in his day, and can hit the hay-stack with the best of us—but stay, they are hallooing on the parson."

They were indeed busied on all hands to obtain Mr. Chatterly's consent to wait on the Genius unknown; but though he smiled and simpered, and was absolutely incapable of saying No, he begged leave, in all humility, to decline that commission. "The truth was," he pleaded in his excuse, "that having one day walked to visit the old Castle of St. Ronan's, and returning through the Auld Town, as it was popularly called, he had stopped at the door of the *Cleikum*" (pronounced *Anglicè*, with the open diphthong), "in hopes to get a glass of syrup of capillaire, or a draught of something cooling; and had in fact expressed his wishes, and was knocking pretty loudly, when a sash-window was thrown suddenly up, and ere he was aware what was about to happen, he was soused with a deluge of water (as he said), while the voice of an old hag from within assured him that if that did not cool him there was another biding him—an intimation which induced him to retreat in all haste from the repetition of this shower-bath."

All laughed at the account of the chaplain's misfortune, the history of which seemed to be wrung from him reluctantly, by the necessity of assigning some weighty cause for declining to execute the ladies' commands. But the Squire and Baronet continued their mirth far longer than decorum allowed, flinging themselves back in their chairs, with their hands thrust into their side pockets, and their mouths expanded with unrestrained enjoyment, until the sufferer, angry, disconcerted, and endeavouring to look scornful, incurred another general burst of laughter on all hands.

When Mr. Winterblossom had succeeded in restoring some degree of order, he found the mishaps of the young divine proved as intimidating as ludicrous. Not one of the company chose to go Envoy Extraordinary to the dominions of Queen Meg, who might be suspected of paying little respect to the sanctity of an

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ambassador's person. And what was worse, when it was resolved that a civil card from Mr. Winterblossom, in the name of the company, should be sent to the stranger instead of a personal visit, Dinah informed them that she was sure no one about the house could be bribed to carry up a letter of the kind; for, when such an event had taken place two summers since, Meg, who construed it into an attempt to seduce from her tenement the invited guest, had so handled a ploughboy who carried the letter, that he fled the country-side altogether, and never thought himself safe till he was at a village ten miles off, where it was afterwards learned he enlisted with a recruiting party, choosing rather to face the French than to return within the sphere of Meg's displeasure.

Just while they were agitating this new difficulty, a prodigious clamour was heard without, which, to the first apprehensions of the company, seemed to be Meg, in all her terrors, come to anticipate the proposed invasion. Upon inquiry, however, it proved to be her gossip, Trotting Nelly, or Nelly Trotter, in the act of forcing her way up stairs, against the united strength of the whole household of the hotel, to reclaim Luckie Dods's picture as she called it. This made the connoisseur's treasure tremble in his pocket, who, thrusting a half-crown into Toby's hand, exhorted him to give it her, and try his influence in keeping her back. Toby, who knew Nelly's nature, put the half-crown into his own pocket, and snatched up a gill-stoup of whisky from the sideboard. Thus armed, he boldly confronted the virago, and interposing a *remora*, which was able to check poor Nelly's course in her most determined moods, not only succeeded in averting the immediate storm which approached the company in general, and Mr. Winterblossom in particular, but brought the guests the satisfactory information, that Trotting Nelly had agreed, after she had slept out her nap in the barn, to convey their commands to the Unknown of Cleikum of Aultoun.

Mr. Winterblossom, therefore, having authenticated his proceedings by inserting in the Minutes of the Committee the authority which he had received, wrote his card in the best style of diplomacy, and sealed it with the seal of the Spa, which bore something like a nymph, seated beside what was designed to represent an urn.

The rival factions, however, did not trust entirely to this

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official invitation. Lady Penelope was of opinion that they should find some way of letting the stranger—a man of talent unquestionably—understand that there were in the society to which he was invited spirits of a more select sort, who felt worthy to intrude themselves on his solitude.

Accordingly her ladyship imposed upon the elegant Mr. Chatterly the task of expressing the desire of the company to see the unknown artist, in a neat occasional copy of verses. The poor gentleman's muse, however, proved unpropitious, for he was able to proceed no farther than two lines in half-an-hour, which, coupled with its variations, we insert from the blotted manuscript, as Dr. Johnson has printed the alterations in Pope's version of the Iliad :—

1. *Maids.* 2. *Dames* *unity joining.*
The [nymphs] of St. Ronan's [in purpose combining]
1. *Swain.* 2. *Man.*
To the [youth] who is great both in verse and designing.
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - dining.

The eloquence of a prose billet was necessarily resorted to in the absence of the heavenly muse, and the said billet was secretly intrusted to the care of Trotting Nelly. The same trusty emissary, when refreshed by her nap among the pease-straw, and about to harness her cart for her return to the sea-coast (in the course of which she was to pass the Aultoun), received another card, written, as he had threatened, by Sir Bingo Binks himself, who had given himself this trouble to secure the settlement of the bet; conjecturing that a man with a fashionable exterior, who could throw twelve yards of line at a cast with such precision, might consider the invitation of Winterblossom as that of an old twaddler, and care as little for the good graces of an affected blue-stocking and her *côterie*, whose conversation, in Sir Bingo's mind, relished of nothing but of weak tea and bread and butter. Thus the happy Mr. Francis Tyrrel received, considerably to his surprise, no less than three invitations at once from the Well of St. Ronan's.

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CHAPTER FIFTH.

EPISTOLARY ELOQUENCE.

But how can I answer, since first I must read thee?
PRIOR.

DESIROUS of authenticating our more important facts, by as many original documents as possible, we have, after much research, enabled ourselves to present the reader with the following accurate transcripts of the notes intrusted to the care of Trotting Nelly. The first ran thus:—

"Mr. Winterblossom [of Silverhed] has the commands of Lady Penelope Penfeather, Sir Bingo and Lady Binks, Mr. and Miss Mowbray [of St. Ronan's], and the rest of the company at the Hotel and Tontine Inn of St. Ronan's Well, to express their hope that the gentleman lodged at the Cleikum Inn, Old Town of St. Ronan's, will favour them with his company at the Ordinary, as early and as often as may suit his convenience. The COMPANY think it necessary to send this intimation, because, according to the RULES of the place, the Ordinary can only be attended by such gentlemen and ladies as lodge at St. Ronan's Well; but they are happy to make a distinction in favour of a gentleman so distinguished for success in the fine arts as Mr. —— ——, residing at Cleikum. If Mr. —— —— should be inclined, upon becoming farther acquainted with the COMPANY and RULES of the place, to remove his residence to the Well, Mr. Winterblossom, though he would not be understood to commit himself by a positive assurance to that effect, is inclined to hope that an arrangement might be made, notwithstanding the extreme crowd of the season, to accommodate Mr. —— —— at the lodging-house, called Lilliput Hall. It will much conduce to facilitate this negotiation, if Mr. —— —— would have the goodness to send an exact note of his stature, as Captain Rannletree seems disposed to resign the folding-bed at Lilliput Hall, on account of his finding it rather deficient in length. Mr. Winterblossom begs farther to assure Mr. —— —— of the

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esteem in which he holds his genius, and of his high personal consideration.

"For ——— ———, Esquire, Cleikum Inn,
Old Town of St. Ronan's.

*"The Public Rooms, Hotel, and Tontine,
St. Ronan's Well, etc. etc. etc."*

The above card was written (we love to be precise in matters concerning orthography) in a neat, round, clerk-like hand, which, like Mr. Winterblossom's character, in many particulars was most accurate and commonplace, though betraying an affectation both of flourish and of facility.

The next billet was a contrast to the diplomatic gravity and accuracy of Mr. Winterblossom's official communication, and ran thus, the young divine's academic jests and classical flowers of eloquence being mingled with some wild flowers from the teeming fancy of Lady Penelope.

"A choir of Dryads and Naiads, assembled at the healing spring of St. Ronan's, have learned with surprise that a youth, gifted by Apollo, when the Deity was prodigal, with two of his most esteemed endowments, wanders at will among their domains, frequenting grove and river, without once dreaming of paying homage to its tutelary deities. He is, therefore, summoned to their presence, and prompt obedience will ensure him forgiveness; but in case of contumacy, let him beware how he again essays either the lyre or the pallet.

"*Postscript.* The adorable Penelope, long enrolled among the Goddesses for her beauty and virtues, gives Nectar and Ambrosia, which mortals call tea and cake, at the Public Rooms, near the Sacred Spring, on Thursday evening, at eight o'clock, when the Muses never fail to attend. The stranger's presence is requested to participate in the delights of the evening.

"*Second Postscript.* A shepherd, ambitiously aiming at more accommodation than his narrow cot affords, leaves it in a day or two.

'Assuredly the thing is to be hired.'
As You Like It.

"*Postscript third.* Our Iris, whom mortals know as Trotting Nelly in her tartan cloak, will bring us the stranger's answer to our celestial summons."

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This letter was written in a delicate Italian hand, garnished with fine hair-strokes and dashes, which were sometimes so dexterously thrown off as to represent lyres, pallets, vases, and other appropriate decorations, suited to the tenor of the contents.

The third epistle was a complete contrast to the other two. It was written in a coarse, irregular, schoolboy half-text, which, however, seemed to have cost the writer as much pains as if it had been a specimen of the most exquisite caligraphy. And these were the contents:—

"SUR—Jack Moobray has betted with me that the samon you killed on Saturday last weyd ni to eiteen pounds,—I say nyer sixteen.—So you being a spurtsman, 'tis refer'd.—So hope you will come or send me't; do not doubt you will be on honour. The bet is a dozen of claret, to be drank at the hotel by our own sett on Monday next; and we beg you will make one; and Moobray hopes you will come down.—Being, sir, your most humbel servant,—Bingo Binks Baronet, and of Block-hall.

"*Postscript.* Have sent some loops of Indian gout, also some black hakkels of my groom's dressing; hope they will prove killing, as suiting river and season."

No answer was received to any of these invitations for more than three days; which, while it secretly rather added to than diminished the curiosity of the Wellers concerning the Unknown, occasioned much railing in public against him, as ill-mannered and rude.

Meantime, Francis Tyrrel, to his great surprise, began to find, like the philosophers, that he was never less alone than when alone. In the most silent and sequestered walks, to which the present state of his mind induced him to betake himself, he was sure to find some strollers from the Well, to whom he had become the object of so much solicitous interest. Quite innocent of the knowledge that he himself possessed the attraction which occasioned his meeting them so frequently, he began to doubt whether the Lady Penelope and her maidens—Mr. Winterblossom and his grey pony—the parson and his short black coat and raven-grey pantaloons—were not either actually polygraphic copies of the same individuals, or possessed of a celerity of motion resembling omnipresence and ubiquity; for nowhere could he go without meeting them, and that oftener than once a-day, in the course of his walks. Sometimes the presence of

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the sweet Lycoris was intimated by the sweet prattle in an adjacent shade; sometimes, when Tyrrel thought himself most solitary, the parson's flute was heard snoring forth Gramachree Molly; and if he betook himself to the river, he was pretty sure to find his sport watched by Sir Bingo or some of his friends.

The efforts which Tyrrel made to escape from this persecution, and the impatience of it which his manner indicated, procured him among the Wellers the name of the *Misanthrope;* and once distinguished as an object of curiosity, he was the person most attended to, who could at the Ordinary of the day give the most accurate account of where the Misanthrope had been, and how occupied in the course of the morning. And so far was Tyrrel's shyness from diminishing the desire of the Wellers for his society, that the latter feeling increased with the difficulty of gratification,—as the angler feels the most peculiar interest when throwing his fly for the most cunning and considerate trout in the pool.

In short, such was the interest which the excited imaginations of the company took in the Misanthrope, that, notwithstanding the unamiable qualities which the word expresses, there was only one of the society who did not desire to see the specimen at their rooms, for the purpose of examining him closely and at leisure; and the ladies were particularly desirous to inquire whether he was actually a Misanthrope? Whether he had been always a Misanthrope? What had induced him to become a Misanthrope? And whether there were no means of inducing him to cease to be a Misanthrope?

One individual only, as we have said, neither desired to see nor hear more of the supposed Timon of Cleikum, and that was Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's. Through the medium of that venerable character John Pirner, professed weaver and practical black-fisher in the Aultoun of St. Ronan's, who usually attended Tyrrel, to show him the casts of the river, carry his bag, and so forth, the Squire had ascertained that the judgment of Sir Bingo regarding the disputed weight of the fish was more correct than his own. This inferred an immediate loss of honour, besides the payment of a heavy bill. And the consequences might be yet more serious; nothing short of the emancipation of Sir Bingo, who had hitherto been Mowbray's convenient shadow and adherent, but who, if triumphant, confiding in his superiority of judgment upon so important a point, might either

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cut him altogether, or expect that, in future, the Squire, who had long seemed the planet of their set, should be content to roll around himself, Sir Bingo, in the capacity of a satellite.

The Squire, therefore, devoutly hoped that Tyrrel's restive disposition might continue, to prevent the decision of the bet, while, at the same time, he nourished a very reasonable degree of dislike to that stranger, who had been the indirect occasion of the unpleasant predicament in which he found himself, by not catching a salmon weighing a pound heavier. He, therefore, openly censured the meanness of those who proposed taking farther notice of Tyrrel, and referred to the unanswered letters, as a piece of impertinence which announced him to be no gentleman.

But though appearances were against him, and though he was in truth naturally inclined to solitude, and averse to the affectation and bustle of such a society, that part of Tyrrel's behaviour which indicated ill-breeding was easily accounted for, by his never having received the letters which required an answer. Trotting Nelly, whether unwilling to face her gossip, Meg Dods, without bringing back the drawing, or whether oblivious through the influence of the double dram with which she had been indulged at the Well, jumbled off with her cart to her beloved village of Scate-raw, from which she transmitted the letters by the first bare-legged gillie who travelled towards Aultoun of St. Ronan's; so that at last, but after a long delay, they reached the Cleikum Inn and the hands of Mr. Tyrrel.

The arrival of these documents explained some part of the oddity of behaviour which had surprised him in his neighbours of the Well; and as he saw they had got somehow an idea of his being a lion extraordinary, and was sensible that such is a character equally ridiculous, and difficult to support, he hastened to write to Mr. Winterblossom a card in the style of ordinary mortals. In this he stated the delay occasioned by miscarriage of the letter, and his regret on that account; expressed his intention of dining with the company at the Well on the succeeding day, while he regretted that other circumstances, as well as the state of his health and spirits, would permit him this honour very unfrequently during his stay in the country, and begged no trouble might be taken about his accommodation at the Well, as he was perfectly satisfied with his present residence. A separate note to Sir Bingo said he was happy he could verify the weight of the fish, which he had

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noted in his diary ("D—n the fellow, does he keep a dairy?" said the Baronet), and though the result could only be particularly agreeable to one party, he should wish both winner and loser mirth with their wine; he was sorry he was unable to promise himself the pleasure of participating in either. Enclosed was a signed note of the weight of the fish. Armed with this, Sir Bingo claimed his wine—triumphed in his judgment—swore louder and more articulately than ever he was known to utter any previous sounds, that this Tyrrel was a devilish honest fellow, and he trusted to be better acquainted with him; while the crest-fallen Squire, privately cursing the stranger by all his gods, had no mode of silencing his companion but by allowing his loss, and fixing a day for discussing the bet.

In the public rooms the company examined even microscopically the response of the stranger to Mr. Winterblossom, straining their ingenuity to discover, in the most ordinary expressions, a deeper and esoteric meaning, expressive of something mysterious, and not meant to meet the eye. Mr. Meiklewham, the writer, dwelt on the word *circumstances*, which he read with peculiar emphasis.

"Ah, poor lad!" he concluded, "I doubt he sits cheaper at Meg Dorts's chimney-corner than he could do with the present company."

Doctor Quackleben, in the manner of a clergyman selecting a word from his text, as that which is particularly insisted upon, repeated in an under tone, the words, "*State of health?*—umph—state of health?—Nothing acute—no one has been sent for—must be chronic—tending to gout, perhaps.—Or his shyness to society—light wild eye—irregular step—starting when met suddenly by a stranger, and turning abruptly and angrily away—Pray, Mr. Winterblossom, let me have an order to look over the file of newspapers—it's very troublesome that restriction about consulting them."

"You know it is a necessary one, Doctor," said the president; "because so few of the good company read anything else, that the old newspapers would have been worn to pieces long since."

"Well well, let me have the order," said the Doctor; "I remember something of a gentleman run away from his friends—I must look at the description.—I believe I have a strait-jacket somewhere about the Dispensary."

While this suggestion appalled the male part of the company,

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who did not much relish the approaching dinner in company with a gentleman whose situation seemed so precarious, some of the younger Misses whispered to each other—"Ah, poor fellow! —and if it be as the Doctor supposes, my lady, who knows what the cause of his illness may have been?—His *spirits* he complains of—ah, poor man!"

And thus, by the ingenious commentaries of the company at the Well, on as plain a note as ever covered the eighth part of a sheet of foolscap, the writer was deprived of his property, his reason, and his heart, "all or either or one or other of them," [illegible] and distinctly expressed in the law phrase. piece of impe[illegible]h was said *pro* and *con*, so many ideas started

But though appeara[illegible]cerning the disposition and character was in truth naturally inclined [illegible] the company assembled at the affectation and bustle of such a soc[illegible]er, they doubted, as it behaviour which indicated ill-breeding w[illegible] to their society was by his never having received the letters [illegible] and when "Mr. answer. Trotting Nelly, whether unwilling t[illegible] his voice, the Meg Dods, without bringing back the drawin[illegible]o distinguish oblivious through the influence of the double dram[illegible]pointment. she had been indulged at the Well, jumbled off with [illegible]mpound to her beloved village of Scate-raw, from which she tran[illegible] which the letters by the first bare-legged gillie who travelled tow[illegible]ith Aultoun of St. Ronan's; so that at last, but after a long delay, they reached the Cleikum Inn and the hands of Mr. Tyrrel.

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he is compelled, but with the air of one who could maintain with ease his part in a higher circle. His address to Lady Penelope was adapted to the romantic tone of Mr. Chatterly's epistle, to which it was necessary to allude. He was afraid, he said, he must complain to Juno of the neglect of Iris, for her irregularity in delivery of a certain ethereal command, which he had not dared to answer otherwise than by mute obedience—unless, indeed, as the import of the letter seemed to infer, the invitation was designed for some more gifted individual than he to whom chance had assigned it.

Lady Penelope by her lips, and many of the young ladies with their eyes, assured him there was no mistake in the matter; that he was really the gifted person whom the nymphs had summoned to their presence, and that they were well acquainted with his talents as a poet and a painter. Tyrrel disclaimed, with earnestness and gravity, the charge of poetry, and professed, that, far from attempting the art itself, he "read with reluctance all but the productions of the very first-rate poets, and some of these—he was almost afraid to say—he should have liked better in humble prose."

"You have now only to disown your skill as an artist," said Lady Penelope, "and we must consider Mr. Tyrrel as the falsest and most deceitful of his sex, who has a mind to deprive us of the opportunity of benefiting by the productions of his unparalleled endowments. I assure you I shall put my young friends on their guard. Such dissimulation cannot be without its object."

"And I," said Mr. Winterblossom, "can produce a piece of real evidence against the culprit."

So saying, he unrolled the sketch which he had filched from Trotting Nelly, and which he had pared and pasted (arts in which he was eminent), so as to take out its creases, repair its breaches, and vamp it as well as my old friend Mrs. Weir could have repaired the damages of time on a folio Shakespeare.

"The vara *corpus delicti*," said the writer, grinning and rubbing his hands.

"If you are so good as to call such scratches drawings," said Tyrrel, "I must stand so far confessed. I used to do them for my own amusement; but since my landlady, Mrs. Dods, has of late discovered that I gain my livelihood by them, why should I disown it?"

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This avowal, made without the least appearance either of shame or *retenue*, seemed to have a striking effect on the whole society. The president's trembling hand stole the sketch back to the portfolio, afraid doubtless it might be claimed in form, or else compensation expected by the artist. Lady Penelope was disconcerted, like an awkward horse when it changes the leading foot in galloping. She had to recede from the respectful and easy footing on which he had contrived to place himself, to one which might express patronage on her own part, and dependence on Tyrrel's; and this could not be done in a moment.

The Man of Law murmured, "Circumstances—circumstances—I thought so!"

Sir Bingo whispered to his friend the Squire, "Run out—blown up—off the course—pity—d—d pretty fellow he has been!"

"A raff from the beginning!" whispered Mowbray.—"I never thought him anything else."

"I'll hold ye a pony of that, my dear, and I'll ask him."

"Done, for a pony, provided you ask him in ten minutes," said the Squire; "but you dare not, Bingie—he has a d—d cross game look, with all that civil chaff of his."

"Done," said Sir Bingo, but in a less confident tone than before, and with a determination to proceed with some caution in the matter.—"I have got a rouleau above, and Winterblossom shall hold stakes."

"I have no rouleau," said the Squire; "but I'll fly a cheque on Meiklewham."

"See it be better than your last," said Sir Bingo, "for I won't be skylarked again.—Jack, my boy, you are had."

"Not till the bet's won; and I shall see yon walking dandy break your head, Bingie, before that," answered Mowbray. "Best speak to the Captain beforehand—it is a hellish scrape you are running into—I'll let you off yet, Bingie, for a guinea forfeit.—See, I am just going to start the tattler."

"Start, and be d—d!" said Sir Bingo. "You are gotten, I assure you o' that, Jack. And with a bow and a shuffle, he went up and introduced himself to the stranger as Sir Bingo Binks.

"Had—honour—write—sir," were the only sounds which his throat, or rather his cravat, seemed to send forth.

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"Confound the booby!" thought Mowbray; "he will get out of leading strings, if he goes on at this rate; and doubly confounded be this cursed tramper, who, the Lord knows why, has come hither from the Lord knows where, to drive the pigs through my game."

In the meantime, while his friend stood with his stop-watch in his hand, with a visage lengthened under the influence of these reflections, Sir Bingo, with an instinctive tact, which self-preservation seemed to dictate to a brain neither the most delicate nor subtle in the world, premised his inquiry with some general remarks on fishing and field-sports. With all these he found Tyrrel more than passably acquainted. Of fishing and shooting, particularly, he spoke with something like enthusiasm; so that Sir Bingo began to hold him in considerable respect, and to assure himself that he could not be, or at least could not originally have been bred, the itinerant artist which he now gave himself out—and this, with the fast lapse of the time, induced him thus to address Tyrrel.—"I say, Mr. Tyrrel—why, you have been one of us—I say"——

"If you mean a sportsman, Sir Bingo—I have been, and am a pretty keen one still," replied Tyrrel.

"Why, then, you did not always do them sort of things?"

"What sort of things do you mean, Sir Bingo?" said Tyrrel. "I have not the pleasure of understanding you."

"Why, I mean them sketches," said Sir Bingo. "I'll give you a handsome order for them, if you tell me. I will, on my honour."

"Does it concern you particularly, Sir Bingo, to know anything of my affairs?" said Tyrrel.

"No—certainly—not immediately," answered Sir Bingo, with some hesitation, for he liked not the dry tone in which Tyrrel's answers were returned half so well as a bumper of dry sherry; "only I said you were a d—d gnostic fellow, and I laid a bet you have not been always professional—that's all."

Mr. Tyrrel replied, "A bet with Mr. Mowbray, I suppose?"

"Yes, with Jack," replied the Baronet—"you have hit it—I hope I have done him?"

Tyrrel bent his brows, and looked first at Mr. Mowbray, then at the Baronet, and, after a moment's thought, addressed the latter.—"Sir Bingo Binks, you are a gentleman of elegant inquiry and acute judgment.—Your are perfectly right—I was *not*

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bred to the profession of an artist, nor did I practise it formerly, whatever I may do now; and so that question is answered."

"And Jack is diddled," said the Baronet, smiting his thigh in triumph, and turning towards the Squire and the stakeholder with a smile of exultation.

"Stop a single moment, Sir Bingo," said Tyrrel; "take one word with you. I have a great respect for bets—it is part of an Englishman's charter to bet on what he thinks fit, and to prosecute his inquiries over hedge and ditch, as if he were steeple-hunting. But as I have satisfied you on the subject of two bets, that is sufficient compliance with the custom of the country; and therefore I request, Sir Bingo, you will not make me or my affairs the subject of any more wagers."

"I'll be d—d if I do," was the internal resolution of Sir Bingo. Aloud he muttered some apologies, and was heartily glad that the dinner-bell, sounding at the moment, afforded him an apology for shuffling off in a different direction.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

TABLE-TALK.

And, sir, if these accounts be true,
The Dutch have mighty things in view
The Austrians—I admire French beans,
Dear ma'am, above all other greens.

* * * * *

And all as lively and as brisk
As—Ma'am, d'ye choose a game at whisk?

TABLE-TALK.

WHEN they were about to leave the room, Lady Penelope assumed Tyrrel's arm with a sweet smile of condescension, meant to make the honoured party understand in its full extent the favour conferred. But the unreasonable artist, far from intimating the least confusion at an attention so little to be expected, seemed to consider the distinction as one which was naturally paid to the greatest stranger present; and when he placed Lady Penelope at the head of the table, by Mr. Winterblossom the president, and took a chair to himself betwixt her ladyship and Lady Binks,

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the provoking wretch appeared no more sensible of being exalted above his proper rank in society, than if he had been sitting at the bottom of the table by honest Mrs. Blower from the Bowhead, who had come to the Well to carry off the dregs of the *Inflienzie*, which she scorned to term a surfeit.

Now this indifference puzzled Lady Penelope's game extremely, and irritated her desire to get at the bottom of Tyrrel's mystery, if there was one, and secure him to her own party. If you were ever at a watering-place, reader, you know that while the guests do not always pay the most polite attention to unmarked individuals, the appearance of a stray lion makes an interest as strong as it is reasonable, and the Amazonian chiefs of each coterie, like the hunters of Buenos Ayres, prepare their *lasso*, and manœuvre to the best advantage they can, each hoping to noose the unsuspicious monster, and lead him captive to her own menagerie. A few words concerning Lady Penelope Penfeather will explain why she practised this sport with even more than common zeal.

She was the daughter of an earl, possessed a showy person, and features which might be called handsome in youth, though now rather too much *prononcés* to render the term proper. The nose was become sharper; the cheeks had lost the roundness of youth; and as, during fifteen years that she had reigned a beauty and a ruling toast, the right man had not spoken, or, at least, had not spoken at the right time, her ladyship, now rendered sufficiently independent by the inheritance of an old relation, spoke in praise of friendship, began to dislike the town in summer, and to "babble of green fields."

About the time that Lady Penelope thus changed the tenor of her life, she was fortunate enough, with Dr. Quackleben's assistance, to find out the virtues of St. Ronan's spring; and, having contributed her share to establish the *Urbs in rure*, which had risen around it, she sat herself down as leader of the fashions in the little province which she had in a great measure both discovered and colonised. She was, therefore, justly desirous to compel homage and tribute from all who should approach the territory.

In other respects, Lady Penelope pretty much resembled the numerous class she belonged to. She was at bottom a well-principled woman, but too thoughtless to let her principles control her humour, therefore not scrupulously nice in her society.

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She was good-natured, but capricious and whimsical, and willing enough to be kind or generous if it neither thwarted her humour, nor cost her much trouble; would have chaperoned a young friend anywhere, and moved the world for subscription tickets: but never troubled herself how much her giddy charge flirted, or with whom; so that, with a numerous class of Misses, her ladyship was the most delightful creature in the world. Then Lady Penelope had lived so much in society, knew so exactly when to speak, and how to escape from an embarrassing discussion, professing ignorance while she looked intelligence, that she was not generally discovered to be a fool, unless when she set up for being remarkably clever. This happened more frequently of late when, perhaps, as she could not but observe that the repairs of the toilette became more necessary, she might suppose that new lights, according to the poet, were streaming on her mind through the chinks that Time was making. Many of her friends, however, thought that Lady Penelope would have better consulted her genius by remaining in mediocrity, as a fashionable and well bred woman, than by parading her new-founded pretensions to taste and patronage; but such was not her own opinion, and doubtless, her ladyship was the best judge.

On the other side of Tyrrel sat Lady Binks, lately the beautiful Miss Bonnyrigg, who, during the last season, had made the company at the Well alternately admire, smile, and stare, by dancing the highest Highland fling, riding the wildest pony, laughing the loudest laugh at the broadest joke, and wearing the briefest petticoat of any nymph of St. Ronan's. Few knew that this wild, hoydenish, half-mad humour was only superinduced over her real character, for the purpose of—getting well married. She had fixed her eyes on Sir Bingo, and was aware of his maxim, that to catch him, "a girl must be," in his own phrase, "bang up to everything;" and that he would choose a wife for the neck-or-nothing qualities which recommend a good hunter. She made out her catch-match, and she was miserable. Her wild good-humour was entirely an assumed part of her character, which was passionate, ambitious, and thoughtful. Delicacy she had none—she knew Sir Bingo was a brute and a fool, even while she was hunting him down; but she had so far mistaken her own feelings, as not to have expected that when she became bone of his bone, she should feel so much shame and anger when she saw his folly expose him to be laughed at and

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plundered, or so disgusted when his brutality became intimately connected with herself. It is true, he was, on the whole, rather an innocent monster; and between bitting and bridling, coaxing and humouring, might have been made to pad on well enough. But an unhappy boggling which had taken place previous to the declaration of their private marriage, had so exasperated her spirits against her helpmate, that modes of conciliation were the last she was likely to adopt. Not only had the assistance of the Scottish Themis, so propitiously indulgent to the foibles of the fair, been resorted to on the occasion, but even Mars seemed ready to enter upon the tapis, if Hymen had not intervened. There was, *de par le monde*, a certain brother of the lady—an officer—and, as it happened, on leave of absence—who alighted from a hack-chaise at the Fox Hotel at eleven o'clock at night, holding in his hand a slip of well-dried oak, accompanied by another gentleman, who, like himself, wore a military travelling-cap and a black stock; out of the said chaise, as was reported by the trusty Toby, were handed a small reise-sac, an Andrea Ferrara, and a neat mahogany box, eighteen inches long, three deep, and some six broad. Next morning a solemn *palaver* (as the natives of Madagascar call their national convention) was held at an unusual hour, at which Captain MacTurk and Mr. Mowbray assisted; and the upshot was, that at breakfast the company were made happy by the information, that Sir Bingo had been for some weeks the happy bridegroom of their general favourite; which union, concealed for family reasons, he was now at liberty to acknowledge, and to fly with the wings of love to bring his sorrowing turtle from the shades to which she had retired till the obstacles to their mutual happiness could be removed. Now, though all this sounded very smoothly, that gall-less turtle, Lady Binks, could never think of the tenor of the proceedings without the deepest feelings of resentment and contempt for the principal actor, Sir Bingo.

Besides all these unpleasant circumstances, Sir Bingo's family had refused to countenance her wish that he should bring her to his own seat; and hence a new shock to her pride, and new matter of contempt against poor Sir Bingo, for being ashamed and afraid to face down the opposition of his kinsfolk, for whose displeasure, though never attending to any good advice from them, he retained a childish awe.

The manners of the young lady were no less changed than

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was her temper; and, from being much too careless and free, were become reserved, sullen, and haughty. A consciousness that many scrupled to hold intercourse with her in society, rendered her disagreeably tenacious of her rank, and jealous of everything that appeared like neglect. She had constituted herself mistress of Sir Bingo's purse; and, unrestrained in the expenses of dress and equipage, chose, contrary to her maiden practice, to be rather rich and splendid than gay, and to command that attention by magnificence, which she no longer deigned to solicit by rendering herself either agreeable or entertaining. One secret source of her misery was, the necessity of showing deference to Lady Penelope Penfeather, whose understanding she despised, and whose pretensions to consequence, to patronage, and to literature, she had acuteness enough to see through, and to contemn; and this dislike was the more grievous, that she felt she depended a good deal on Lady Penelope's countenance for the situation she was able to maintain even among the not very select society of St. Ronan's Well; and that, neglected by her, she must have dropped lower in the scale even there. Neither was Lady Penelope's kindness to Lady Binks extremely cordial. She partook in the ancient and ordinary dislike of single nymphs of a certain age, to those who make splendid alliances under their very eye—and she more than suspected the secret disaffection of the lady. But the name sounded well; and the style in which Lady Binks lived was a credit to the place. So they satisfied their mutual dislike with saying a few sharp things to each other occasionally, but all under the mask of civility.

Such was Lady Binks; and yet, being such, her dress, and her equipage, and carriages, were the envy of half the Misses at the Well, who, while she sat disfiguring with sullenness her very lovely face (for it was as beautiful as her shape was exquisite), only thought she was proud of having carried her point, and felt herself, with her large fortune and diamond bandeau, no fit company for the rest of the party. They gave way, therefore, with meekness to her domineering temper, though it was not the less tyrannical, that in her maiden state of hoydenhood, she had been to some of them an object of slight and of censure; and Lady Binks had not forgotten the offences offered to Miss Bonnyrigg. But the fair sisterhood submitted to her retaliations, as lieutenants endure the bully-

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ing of a rude and boisterous captain of the sea, with the secret determination to pay it home to their underlings when they shall become captains themselves.

In this state of importance, yet of penance, Lady Binks occupied her place at the dinner-table, alternately disconcerted by some stupid speech of her lord and master, and by some slight sarcasm from Lady Penelope, to which she longed to reply, but dared not.

She looked from time to time at her neighbour, Frank Tyrrel, but without addressing him, and accepted in silence the usual civilities which he proffered to her. She had remarked keenly his interview with Sir Bingo, and knowing by experience the manner in which her honoured lord was wont to retreat from a dispute in which he was unsuccessful, as well as his genius for getting into such perplexities, she had little doubt that he had sustained from the stranger some new indignity; whom, therefore, she regarded with a mixture of feeling, scarce knowing whether to be pleased with him for having given pain to him whom she hated, or angry with him for having affronted one in whose degradation her own was necessarily involved. There might be other thoughts—on the whole, she regarded him with much though with mute attention. He paid her but little in return, being almost entirely occupied in replying to the questions of the engrossing Lady Penelope Penfeather.

Receiving polite though rather evasive answers to her inquiries concerning his late avocations, her ladyship could only learn that Tyrrel had been travelling in several remote parts of Europe, and even of Asia. Baffled, but not repulsed, the lady continued her courtesy, by pointing out to him, as a stranger, several individuals of the company to whom she proposed introducing him, as persons from whose society he might derive either profit or amusement. In the midst of this sort of conversation, however, she suddenly stopped short.

"Will you forgive me, Mr. Tyrrel," she said, "if I say I have been watching your thoughts for some moments, and that I have detected you? All the while I have been talking of these good folks, and that you have been making such civil replies, that they might be with great propriety and utility inserted in the 'Familiar Dialogues, teaching foreigners how to express themselves in English upon ordinary occasions'—your mind has been entirely fixed upon that empty chair, which

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hath remained there opposite betwixt our worthy president and Sir Bingo Binks."

"I own, madam," he answered, "I was a little surprised at seeing such a distinguished seat unoccupied, while the table is rather crowded."

"Oh, confess more, sir!—Confess that to a poet a seat unoccupied—the chair of Banquo—has more charms than if it were filled even as an alderman would fill it.—What if 'the Dark Ladye'* should glide in and occupy it?—Would you have courage to stand the vision, Mr. Tyrrel?—I assure you the thing is not impossible."

"*What* is not impossible, Lady Penelope?" said Tyrrel, somewhat surprised.

"Startled already?—Nay, then, I despair of your enduring the awful interview."

"What interview? who is expected?" said Tyrrel, unable with the utmost exertion to suppress some signs of curiosity, though he suspected the whole to be merely some mystification of her ladyship.

"How delighted I am," she said, "that I have found out where you are vulnerable!—Expected—did I say expected?—no, not expected.

'She glides, like Night, from land to land,
She hath strange power of speech.'

—But come, I have you at my mercy, and I will be generous and explain.—We call—that is, among ourselves, you understand—Miss Clara Mowbray, the sister of that gentleman that sits next to Miss Parker, the Dark Ladye, and that seat is left for her.—For she was expected—no, not expected—I forget again!—but it was thought *possible* she might honour us today, when our feast was so full and piquant.—Her brother is our Lord of the Manor—and so they pay her that sort of civility to regard her as a visitor—and neither Lady Binks nor I think of objecting—She is a singular young person, Clara Mowbray—she amuses me very much—I am always rather glad to see her."

"She is not to come hither to-day," said Tyrrel; "am I so to understand your Ladyship?"

"Why, it is past her time—even *her* time," said Lady

* Note C. The Dark Ladye.

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Penelope—"dinner was kept back half-an-hour, and our poor invalids were famishing, as you may see by the deeds they have done since.—But Clara is an odd creature, and if she took it into her head to come hither at this moment, hither she would come—she is very whimsical.—Many people think her handsome—but she looks so like something from another world, that she makes me always think of Mat Lewis's Spectre Lady."

And she repeated with much cadence,

"'There is a thing—there is a thing,
I fain would have from thee;
I fain would have that gay gold ring,
O warrior, give it me!'

"And then you remember his answer:—

This ring Lord Brooke from his daughter took,
And a solemn oath he swore,
That that ladye my bride should be
When this crusade was o'er.'

You do figures as well as landscapes, I suppose, Mr. Tyrrel?—You shall make a sketch for me—a slight thing—for sketches, I think, show the freedom of art better than finished pieces—I dote on the first coruscations of genius—flashing like lightning from the cloud!—You shall make a sketch for my own boudoir—my dear sulky den at Air Castle, and Clara Mowbray shall sit for the Ghost Ladye."

"That would be but a poor compliment to your ladyship's friend," replied Tyrrel.

"Friend? We don't get quite that length, though I like Clara very well.—Quite sentimental cast of face,—I think I saw an antique in the Louvre very like her—(I was there in 1800)—quite an antique countenance—eyes something hollowed—care has dug caves for them, but they are caves of the most beautiful marble arched with jet—a straight nose, and absolutely the Grecian mouth and chin—a profusion of long straight black hair, with the whitest skin you ever saw—as white as the whitest parchment—and not a shade of colour in her cheek—none whatever—If she would be naughty, and borrow a prudent touch of complexion, she might be called beautiful. Even as it is, many think her so, although surely, Mr. Tyrrel, three colours are necessary to the female face. However, we used to call her the Melpomene of the Spring last

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season, as we called Lady Binks—who was not then Lady Binks—our Euphrosyne—Did we not, my dear?"

"Did we not what, madam?" said Lady Binks, in a tone something sharper than ought to have belonged to so beautiful a countenance.

"I am sorry I have started you out of your reverie, my love," answered Lady Penelope. "I was only assuring Mr. Tyrrel that you were once Euphrosyne, though now so much under the banners of Il Penseroso."

"I do not know that I have been either one or the other," answered Lady Binks; "one thing I certainly am not—I am not capable of understanding your ladyship's wit and learning."

"Poor soul," whispered Lady Penelope to Tyrrel; "we know what we are, we know not what we may be.—And now, Mr. Tyrrel, I have been your sibyl to guide you through this Elysium of ours, I think, in reward, I deserve a little confidence in return."

"If I had any to bestow, which could be in the slightest degree interesting to your ladyship," answered Tyrrel.

"Oh! cruel man—he will not understand me!" exclaimed the lady—"In plain words, then, a peep into your portfolio—just to see what objects you have rescued from natural decay, and rendered immortal by the pencil. You do not know—indeed, Mr. Tyrrel, you do not know how I dote upon your 'serenely silent art,' second to poetry alone—equal—superior perhaps—to music."

"I really have little that could possibly be worth the attention of such a judge as your ladyship," answered Tyrrel; "such trifles as your ladyship has seen, I sometimes leave at the foot of the tree I have been sketching."

"As Orlando left his verses in the Forest of Ardennes?—Oh, the thoughtless prodigality!—Mr. Winterblossom, do you hear this?—We must follow Mr. Tyrrel in his walks, and glean what he leaves behind him."

Her ladyship was here disconcerted by some laughter on Sir Bingo's side of the table, which she chastised by an angry glance, and then proceeded emphatically.

"Mr. Tyrrel, this must *not* be—this is not the way of the world, my good sir, to which even Genius must stoop its flight. We must consult the engraver—though perhaps you etch as well as you draw?"

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"I should suppose so," said Mr. Winterblossom, edging in a word with difficulty, "from the freedom of Mr. Tyrrel's touch."

"I will not deny my having spoiled a little copper now and then," said Tyrrel, "since I am charged with the crime by such good judges; but it has only been by way of experiment."

"Say no more," said the lady; "my darling wish is accomplished!—We have long desired to have the remarkable and most romantic spots of our little Arcadia here—spots consecrated to friendship, the fine arts, the loves and the graces, immortalised by the graver's art, faithful to its charge of fame—you shall labour on this task, Mr. Tyrrel; we will all assist with notes and illustrations—we will all contribute—only some of us must be permitted to remain anonymous—Fairy favours, you know, Mr. Tyrrel, must be kept secret—And you shall be allowed the pillage of the Album—some sweet things there of Mr. Chatterly's—and Mr. Edgeit, a gentleman of your own profession, I am sure will lend his aid—Dr. Quackleben will contribute some scientific notices.—And for subscription"——

"Financial—financial—your leddyship, I speak to order!" said the writer, interrupting Lady Penelope with a tone of impudent familiarity, which was meant doubtless for jocular ease.

"How am I out of order, Mr. Meiklewham?" said her ladyship, drawing herself up.

"I speak to order!—No warrants for money can be extracted before intimation to the Committee of Management."

"Pray who mentioned money, Mr. Meiklewham?" said her ladyship.—"That wretched old pettifogger," she added in a whisper to Tyrrel, "thinks of nothing else but the filthy pelf."

"Ye spake of subscription, my leddy, whilk is the same thing as money, differing only in respect of time—the subscription being a contract *de futuro*, and having a *tractus temporis in gremio*—And I have kend mony honest folks in the company at the Well complain of the subscriptions as a great abuse, as obliging them either to look unlike other folk, or to gie good lawful coin for ballants and picture-books, and things they caredna a pinch of snuff for."

Several of the company, at the lower end of the table, assented both by nods and murmurs of approbation; and the orator was about to proceed, when Tyrrel with difficulty procured a hearing before the debate went farther, and assured the company that her ladyship's goodness had led her into an

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error; that he had no work in hand worthy of their patronage, and, with the deepest gratitude for Lady Penelope's goodness, had it not in his power to comply with her request. There was some tittering at her ladyship's expense, who, as the writer slyly observed, had been something *ultronious* in her patronage. Without attempting for the moment any rally (as indeed the time which had passed since the removal of the dinner scarce permitted an opportunity), Lady Penelope gave the signal for the ladies' retreat, and left the gentlemen to the circulation of the bottle.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

THE TEA-TABLE.

——— While the cups,
Which cheer, but not inebriate, wait on each.
COWPER.

It was common at the Well for the fair guests occasionally to give tea to the company,—such at least as, from their rank and leading in the little society, might be esteemed fit to constitute themselves patronesses of an evening; and the same lady generally carried the authority she had acquired into the ball-room, where two fiddles and a bass, at a guinea a night, with a *quantum sufficit* of tallow-candles (against the use of which Lady Penelope often mutinied), enabled the company —to use the appropriate phrase—"to close the evening on the light fantastic toe."

On the present occasion the lion of the hour, Mr. Francis Tyrrel, had so little answered the high-wrought expectations of Lady Penelope, that she rather regretted having ever given herself any trouble about him, and particularly that of having manœuvred herself into the patronage of the tea-table for the evening, to the great expenditure of souchong and congo. Accordingly, her ladyship had no sooner summoned her own woman, and her *fille de chambre*, to make tea, with her page, footman, and postilion, to hand it about (in which duty they were assisted by two richly laced and thickly powdered footmen

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of Lady Binks's, whose liveries put to shame the more modest garb of Lady Penelope's, and even dimmed the glory of the suppressed coronet upon the buttons), than she began to vilipend and depreciate what had been so long the object of her curiosity.

"This Mr. Tyrrel," she said, in a tone of authoritative decision, "seems after all a very ordinary sort of person—quite a commonplace man, who, she dared say, had considered his condition, in going to the old ale-house, much better than they had done for him, when they asked him to the Public Rooms. He had known his own place better than they did—there was nothing uncommon in his appearance or conversation—nothing at all *frappant*—she scarce believed he could even draw that sketch. Mr. Winterblossom, indeed, made a great deal of it; but then all the world knew that every scrap of engraving or drawing, which Mr. Winterblossom contrived to make his own, was, the instant it came into his collection, the finest thing that ever was seen—that was the way with collectors—their geese were all swans."

"And your Ladyship's swan has proved but a goose, my dearest Lady Pen," said Lady Binks.

"*My* swan, dearest Lady Binks! I really do not know how I have deserved the appropriation."

"Do not be angry, my dear Lady Penelope; I only mean, that for a fortnight and more you have spoken constantly *of* this Mr. Tyrrel, and all dinner-time you spoke *to* him."

The fair company began to collect around, at hearing the word *dear* so often repeated in the same brief dialogue, which induced them to expect sport, and like the vulgar on a similar occasion, to form a ring for the expected combatants.

"He sat betwixt us, Lady Binks," answered Lady Penelope. with dignity. "You had your usual headach, you know, and for the credit of the company, I spoke for one."

"For *two*, if your ladyship pleases," replied Lady Binks. "I mean," she added, softening the expression, "for yourself and me."

"I am sorry," said Lady Penelope, "I should have spoken for one who can speak so smartly for herself, as my dear Lady Binks—I did not by any means desire to engross the conversation—I repeat it, there is a mistake about this man."

"I think there is," said Lady Binks, in a tone which

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implied something more than mere assent to Lady Penelope's proposition.

"I doubt if he is an artist at all," said the Lady Penelope; "or if he is, he must be doing things for some Magazine, or Encyclopædia, or some such matter."

"*I* doubt, too, if he be a professional artist," said Lady Binks. "If so, he is of the very highest class, for I have seldom seen a better-bred man."

"There are very well-bred artists," said Lady Penelope. "It is the profession of a gentleman."

"Certainly," answered Lady Binks; "but the poorer class have often to struggle with poverty and dependence. In general society they are like commercial people in presence of their customers; and that is a difficult part to sustain. And so you see them of all sorts—shy and reserved, when they are conscious of merit—petulant and whimsical, by way of showing their independence—intrusive, in order to appear easy—and sometimes obsequious and fawning, when they chance to be of a mean spirit. But you seldom see them quite at their ease, and therefore I hold this Mr. Tyrrel to be either an artist of the first class, raised completely above the necessity and degradation of patronage, or else to be no professional artist at all."

Lady Penelope looked at Lady Binks with much such a regard as Balaam may have cast upon his ass, when he discovered the animal's capacity for holding an argument with him. She muttered to herself—

"*Mon âne parle, et même il parle bien!*"

But declining the altercation which Lady Binks seemed disposed to enter into, she replied with good humour, "Well, dearest Rachel, we will not pull caps about this man—nay, I think your good opinion of him gives him new value in my eyes. That is always the way with us, my good friend! We may confess it, when there are none of these conceited male wretches among us. We will know what he really is—he shall not wear fern-seed, and walk among us invisible thus—what say you, Maria?"

"Indeed, I say, dear Lady Penelope," answered Miss Digges, whose ready chatter we have already introduced to the reader, "he is a very handsome man, though his nose is too big, and

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his mouth too wide—but his teeth are like pearl—and he has such eyes!—especially when your ladyship spoke to him. I don't think you looked at his eyes—they are quite deep and dark, and full of glow, like what you read to us in the letter from that lady, about Robert Burns."

"Upon my word, miss, you come on finely," said Lady Penelope.—"One had need take care what they read or talk about before you, I see—Come, Jones, have mercy upon us—put an end to that symphony of tinkling cups and saucers, and let the first act of the tea-table begin, if you please."

"Does her leddyship mean the grace," said honest Mrs. Blower, for the first time admitted into this worshipful society, and busily employed in arranging an Indian handkerchief, that might have made a mainsail for one of her husband's smuggling luggers, which she spread carefully on her knee, to prevent damage to a flowered black silk gown from the repast of tea and cake, to which she proposed to do due honour,—"Does her leddyship mean the grace? I see the minister is just coming in.—Her leddyship waits till ye say a blessing, an ye please, sir."

Mr. Winterblossom, who *toddled* after the chaplain, his toe having given him an alert hint to quit the dining-table, though he saw every feature in the poor woman's face swollen with desire to procure information concerning the ways and customs of the place, passed on the other side of the way, regardless of her agony of curiosity.

A moment after she was relieved by the entrance of Dr. Quackleben, whose maxim being that one patient was as well worth attention as another, and who knew by experience, that the *honoraria* of a godly wife of the Bow-head were as apt to be forthcoming (if not more so), as my Lady Penelope's, he e'en sat himself quietly down by Mrs. Blower, and proceeded with the utmost kindness to inquire after her health, and to hope she had not forgotten taking a table-spoonful of spirits burnt to a *residuum*, in order to qualify the crudities.

"Indeed, Doctor," said the honest woman, "I loot the brandy burn as lang as I dought look at the gude creature wasting its sell that gate—and then, when I was fain to put it out for very thrift, I did take a thimbleful of it (although it is not the thing I am used to, Dr. Quackleben), and I winna say but that it did me good."

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"Unquestionably, madam," said the Doctor. "I am no friend to the use of alcohol in general, but there are particular cases—there are particular cases, Mrs. Blower—My venerated instructor, one of the greatest men in our profession that ever lived, took a wine-glassful of old rum, mixed with sugar, every day after his dinner."

"Ay? dear heart, he would be a comfortable doctor that," said Mrs. Blower. "He wad maybe ken something of my case. Is he living, think ye, sir?"

"Dead for many years, madam," said Dr. Quackleben; "and there are but few of his pupils that can fill his place, I assure ye. If I could be thought an exception, it is only because I was a favourite. Ah! blessings on the old red cloak of him!—It covered more of the healing science than the gowns of a whole modern university."

"There is ane, sir," said Mrs. Blower, "that has been muckle recommended about Edinburgh—Macgregor, I think they ca' him—folk come far and near to see him."*

"I know who you mean, ma'am—a clever man—no denying it—a clever man—but there are certain cases—yours, for example—and I think that of many that come to drink this water—which I cannot say I think he perfectly understands—hasty—very hasty and rapid. Now I—I give the disease its own way at first—then watch it, Mrs. Blower—watch the turn of the tide."

"Ay, troth, that's true," responded the widow; "John Blower was aye watching turn of tide, puir man."

"Then he is a starving Doctor, Mrs. Blower—reduces diseases as soldiers do towns—by famine, not considering that the friendly inhabitants suffer as much as the hostile garrison—ahem!"

Here he gave an important and emphatic cough, and then proceeded.

"I am no friend either to excess or to violent stimulus, Mrs. Blower—but nature must be supported—a generous diet—cordials judiciously thrown in—not without the advice of a medical man—that is my opinion, Mrs. Blower, to speak as a friend—others may starve their patients if they have a mind."

* The late Dr. Gregory is probably intimated, as one of the celebrated Dr. Cullen's personal habits is previously mentioned. Dr. Gregory was distinguished for putting his patients on a severe regimen.

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"It wadna do for me, the starving, Dr. Keekerben," said the alarmed relict,—"it wadna do for me at a'—Just a' I can do to wear through the day with the sma' supports that nature requires—not a soul to look after me, Doctor, since John Blower was ta'en awa.—Thank ye kindly, sir" (to the servant who handed the tea),—"thank ye, my bonny man" (to the page who served the cake)—"Now, dinna ye think, Doctor" (in a low and confidential voice), "that her leddyship's tea is rather of the weakliest—water bewitched, I think—and Mrs. Jones, as they ca' her, has cut the seed-cake very thin?"

"It is the fashion, Mrs. Blower," answered Dr. Quackleben; "and her ladyship's tea is excellent. But your taste is a little chilled, which is not uncommon at the first use of the waters, so that you are not sensible of the flavour—we must support the system—we reinforce the digestive powers—give me leave—you are a stranger, Mrs. Blower, and must take care of you—I have an elixir which will put that matter to rights in a moment."

So saying, Dr. Quackleben pulled from his pocket a small portable case of medicines—"Catch me without my tools"—he said; "here I have the real useful pharmacopœia—the rest is all humbug and hard names—this little case, with a fortnight or month, spring and fall, at St. Ronan's Well, and no one will die till his day come."

Thus boasting, the Doctor drew from his case a large vial or small flask, full of a high-coloured liquid, of which he mixed three tea-spoonfuls in Mrs. Blower's cup, who immediately afterwards allowed that the flavour was improved beyond all belief, and that it was "vera comfortable and restorative indeed."

"Will it not do good to my complaints, Doctor?" said Mr. Winterblossom, who had strolled towards them, and held out his cup to the physician.

"I by no means recommend it, Mr. Winterblossom," said Dr. Quackleben, shutting up his case with great coolness; "your case is œdematous, and you treat it your own way—you are as good a physician as I am, and I never interfere with another practitioner's patient."

"Well, Doctor," said Winterblossom, "I must wait till Sir Bingo comes in—he has a hunting-flask usually about him, which contains as good medicine as yours to the full."

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"You will wait for Sir Bingo some time," said the Doctor, "he is a gentleman of sedentary habits—he has ordered another magnum."

"Sir Bingo is an unco name for a man o' quality, dinna ye think sae, Dr. Cocklehen?" said Mrs. Blower. "John Blower, when he was a wee bit in the wind's eye, as he ca'd it, puir fallow—used to sing a sang about a dog they ca'd Bingo, that suld hae belanged to a farmer."

"Our Bingo is but a puppy yet, madam—or if a dog he is a sad dog," said Mr. Winterblossom, applauding his own wit by one of his own inimitable smiles.

"Or a mad dog, rather," said Mr. Chatterly, "for he drinks no water;" and he also smiled gracefully at the thoughts of having trumped, as it were, the president's pun.

"Twa pleasant men, Doctor," said the widow, "and so is Sir Bungy too, for that matter; but oh! is nae it a pity he should bide sae lang by the bottle? It was puir John Blower's faut too, that weary tippling; when he wan to the lee-side of a bowl of punch there was nae raising him.—But they are taking awa the things, and, Doctor, is it not an awfu' thing, that the creature-comforts should hae been used without grace or thanksgiving?—that Mr. Chitterling, if he really be a minister, has muckle to answer for, that he neglects his Master's service."

"Why, madam," said the Doctor, "Mr. Chatterly is scarce arrived at the rank of a minister plenipotentiary."

"A minister potentiary—ah, Doctor, I doubt that is some jest of yours," said the widow; "that's sae like puir John Blower. When I wad hae had him gie up the Lovely Peggy, ship and cargo (the vessel was named after me, Dr. Kittleben), to be remembered in the prayers o' the congregation, he wad say to me, 'They may pray that stand the risk, Peggy Bryce, for I've made insurance.' He was a merry man, Doctor; but he had the root of the matter in him, for a' his light way of speaking, as deep as ony skipper that ever loosed anchor from Leith Roads. I hae been a forsaken creature since his death—Oh the weary days and nights that I have had!—and the weight on the spirits—the spirits, Doctor!—though I canna say I hae been easier since I hae been at the Wall than even now—if I kend what I was awing you for elickstir, Doctor, for it's done me muckle heart's good, forby the opening of my mind to you?"

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"Fie, fie, ma'am," said the Doctor, as the widow pulled out a sealskin pouch, such as sailors carry tobacco in, but apparently well stuffed with bank-notes,—"Fie, fie, madam—I am no apothecary—I have my diploma from Leyden—a regular physician, madam,—the elixir is heartily at your service; and should you want any advice, no man will be prouder to assist you than your humble servant."

"I am sure I am muckle obliged to your kindness, Dr. Kickalpin," said the widow, folding up her pouch; "this was puir John Blower's *spleuchan*,* as they ca' it—I e'en wear it for his sake. He was a kind man, and left me comfortable in warld's gudes; but comforts hae their cumbers,—to be a lone woman is a sair weird, Dr. Kittlepin."

Dr. Quackleben drew his chair a little nearer that of the widow, and entered into a closer communication with her, in a tone doubtless of more delicate consolation than was fit for the ears of the company at large.

One of the chief delights of a watering-place is, that every one's affairs seem to be put under the special surveillance of the whole company, so that, in all probability, the various flirtations, *liaisons*, and so forth, which naturally take place in the society, are not only the subject of amusement to the parties engaged, but also to the lookers on; that is to say, generally speaking, to the whole community, of which for the time the said parties are members. Lady Penelope, the presiding goddess of the region, watchful over all her circle, was not long of observing that the Doctor seemed to be suddenly engaged in close communication with the widow, and that he had even ventured to take hold of her fair plump hand, with a manner which partook at once of the gallant suitor, and of the medical adviser.

"For the love of Heaven," said her ladyship, "who can that comely dame be, on whom our excellent and learned Doctor looks with such uncommon regard?"

"Fat, fair, and forty," said Mr. Winterblossom; "that is all I know of her—a mercantile person."

"A carrack, Sir President," said the chaplain, "richly laden with colonial produce, by name the Lovely Peggy Bryce—no master—the late John Blower of North Leith having pushed

* A fur pouch for keeping tobacco.

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off his boat for the Stygian Creek, and left the vessel without a hand on board."

"The Doctor," said Lady Penelope, turning her glass towards them, "seems willing to play the part of pilot."

"I dare say he will be willing to change her name and register," said Mr. Chatterly.

"He can be no less in common requital," said Winterblossom. "She has changed *his* name six times in the five minutes that I stood within hearing of them."

"What do you think of the matter, my dear Lady Binks?" said Lady Penelope.

"Madam?" said Lady Binks, starting from a reverie, and answering as one who either had not heard, or did not understand the question, as it were,

"Twa pleasant men, Doctor, what is going on yonder?" Bungy too, for that matter; but oh the direction of Lady Penebide sae lang by the bottle? It was pul Doctor with one bold too, that weary tippling; when he wan to d slowly, said with bowl of punch there was nae raising him. thinking about." taking awa the things, and, Doctor, is it not an " said Lady that the creature-comforts should hae been used with h engrossed thanksgiving?—that Mr. Chitterling, if he really be a ither time has muckle to answer for, that he neglects his Master's se onny-

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lord and master of yours, and of Mowbray, who might have more sense, and of the rest of that claret-drinking set, to be quarrelling and alarming our nerves every evening with presenting their pistols perpetually at each other, like sportsmen confined to the house upon a rainy 12th of August. I am tired of the Peace-maker—he but skins the business over in one case to have it break out elsewhere.—What think you, love, if we were to give out in orders, that the next quarrel which may arise, shall be *bona fide* fought to an end?—We will all go out and see it, and wear the colours on each side; and if there should a funeral come of it, we will attend it in a body.—Weeds are so becoming!—Are they not, my dear Lady Binks? Look at Widow Blower in her deep black—don't you envy her, my love?"

Lady Binks seemed about to make a sharp and hasty answer, but checked herself, perhaps under the recollection that she could not prudently come to an open breach with Lady Penelope.—At the same moment a door opened, and a lady dressed in a riding-habit, and wearing a black veil over her hat, appeared at the entry of the apartment.

"Angels and ministers of grace!" exclaimed Lady Penelope, with her very best tragic start—"My dearest Clara, why so late? and why thus? Will you step to my dressing-room—Jones will get you one of my gowns—we are just of a size, you know—do, pray—let me be vain of something of my own for once, by seeing you wear it."

This was spoken in the tone of the fondest female friendship, and at the same time, the fair hostess bestowed on Miss Mowbray one of those tender caresses, which ladies—God bless them!—sometimes bestow on each other with unnecessary prodigality, to the great discontent and envy of the male spectators.

"You are fluttered, my dearest Clara—you are feverish—I am sure you are," continued the sweetly anxious Lady Penelope; "let me persuade you to lie down."

"Indeed you are mistaken, Lady Penelope," said Miss Mowbray, who seemed to receive much as a matter of course her ladyship's profusion of affectionate politeness:—"I am heated, and my pony trotted hard, that is the whole mystery.—Let me have a cup of tea, Mrs. Jones, and the matter is ended."

"Fresh tea, Jones, directly," said Lady Penelope, and led

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her passive friend to her own corner, as she was pleased to call the recess in which she held her little court—ladies and gentlemen courtesying and bowing as she passed; to which civilities the new guest made no more return than the most ordinary politeness rendered unavoidable.

Lady Binks did not rise to receive her, but sat upright in her chair, and bent her head very stiffly; a courtesy which Miss Mowbray returned in the same stately manner, without farther greeting on either side.

"Now, wha can that be, Doctor?" said the Widow Blower—"mind ye have promised to tell me all about the grand folk—wha can that be that Leddy Penelope hauds such a racket wi'—and what for does she come wi' a habit and a beaver-hat, when we are a' (a glance at her own gown) in our silks and satins?"

"To tell you who she is, my dear Mrs. Blower, is very easy," said the officious Doctor. "She is Miss Clara Mowbray, sister to the Lord of the Manor—the gentleman who wears the green coat, with an arrow on the cape. To tell why she wears that habit, or does anything else, would be rather beyond doctor's skill. Truth is, I have always thought she was a little—a very little—touched—call it nerves—hypochondria—or what you will."

"Lord help us, puir thing!" said the compassionate widow.—"And troth it looks like it. But it's a shame to let her go loose, doctor—she might hurt hersell, or somebody. See, she has ta'en the knife!—Oh, it's only to cut a shave of the diet-loaf. She winna let the powder-monkey of a boy help her. There's judgment in that though, Doctor, for she can cut thick or thin as she likes.—Dear me! she has not taken mair than a crumb, that ane would pit between the wires of a canary-bird's cage, after all.—I wish she would lift up that lang veil, or put aff that riding skirt, Doctor. She should really be showed the regulations, Doctor Kickleshin."

"She cares about no rules we can make, Mrs. Blower," said the Doctor; "and her brother's will and pleasure, and Lady Penelope's whim of indulging her, carry her through in everything. They should take advice on her case."

"Ay, truly it's time to take advice, when young creatures like her caper in amang dressed leddies, just as if they were come from scampering on Leith sands.—Such a wark as my

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leddy makes wi' her, Doctor! Ye would think they were baith fools of a feather."

"They might have flown on one wing, for what I know," said Dr. Quackleben; "but there was early and sound advice taken in Lady Penelope's case. My friend, the late Earl of Featherhead, was a man of judgment—did little in his family but by rule of medicine—so that, what with the waters, and what with my own care, Lady Penelope is only freakish—fanciful—that's all—and her quality bears it out—the peccant principle might have broken out under other treatment."

"Ay—she has been weel-friended," said the widow; "but this bairn Mowbray, puir thing! how came she to be sae left to hersell?"

"Her mother was dead—her father thought of nothing but his sports," said the Doctor. "Her brother was educated in England, and cared for nobody but himself, if he had been here. What education she got was at her own hand—what reading she read was in a library full of old romances—what friends or company she had was what chance sent her—then no family-physician, not even a good surgeon within ten miles! And so you cannot wonder if the poor thing became unsettled!"

"Puir thing!—no doctor!—nor even a surgeon!—But, Doctor," said the widow, "maybe the puir thing had the enjoyment of her health ye ken, and then"——

"Aha! ha, ha!—why *then*, madam, she needed a physician far more than if she had been delicate. A skilful physician, Mrs. Blower, knows how to bring down that robust health, which is a very alarming state of the frame when it is considered *secundum artem*. Most sudden deaths happen when people are in a robust state of health. Ah! that state of perfect health is what the doctor dreads most on behalf of his patient."

"Ay, ay, Doctor!—I am quite sensible, nae doubt," said the widow, "of the great advantage of having a skeelfu' person about ane."

Here the Doctor's voice, in his earnestness to convince Mrs. Blower of the danger of supposing herself capable of living and breathing without a medical man's permission, sunk into a soft pleading tone, of which our reporter could not catch the sound. He was, as great orators will sometimes be, "inaudible in the gallery."

Meanwhile, Lady Penelope overwhelmed Clara Mowbray

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with her caresses. In what degree her ladyship, at her heart, loved this young person, might be difficult to ascertain,—probably in the degree in which a child loves a favourite toy. But Clara was a toy not always to be come by—as whimsical in her way as her ladyship in her own, only that poor Clara's singularities were real, and her ladyship's chiefly affected. Without adopting the harshness of the Doctor's conclusions concerning the former, she was certainly unequal in her spirits; and her occasional fits of levity were chequered by very long intervals of sadness. Her levity also appeared, in the world's eye, greater than it really was; for she had never been under the restraint of society which was really good, and entertained an undue contempt for that which she sometimes mingled with; having unhappily none to teach her the important truth, that some forms and restraints are to be observed, less in respect to others than to ourselves. Her dress, her manners, and her ideas, were therefore very much her own; and though they became her wonderfully, yet, like Ophelia's garlands, and wild snatches of melody, they were calculated to excite compassion and melancholy, even while they amused the observer.

"And why came you not to dinner?—We expected you—your throne was prepared?"

"I had scarce come to tea," said Miss Mowbray, "of my own free will. But my brother says your ladyship proposes to come to Shaws Castle, and he insisted it was quite right and necessary, to confirm you in so flattering a purpose, that I should come and say, Pray do, Lady Penelope; and so now here am I to say, Pray, do come."

"Is an invitation so flattering limited to me alone, my dear Clara?—Lady Binks will be jealous."

"Bring Lady Binks, if she has the condescension to honour us"—[a bow was very stiffly exchanged between the ladies]—"bring Mr. Springblossom—Winterblossom—and all the lions and lionesses—we have room for the whole collection. My brother, I suppose, will bring his own particular regiment of bears, which, with the usual assortment of monkeys seen in all caravans, will complete the menagerie. How you are to be entertained at Shaws Castle, is, I thank Heaven, not my business, but John's."

"We shall want no formal entertainment, my love," said

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Lady Penelope; "a *déjeûner à la fourchette*—we know, Clara, you would die of doing the honours of a formal dinner."

"Not a bit; I should live long enough to make my will, and bequeath all large parties to Old Nick, who invented them."

"Miss Mowbray," said Lady Binks, who had been thwarted by this free-spoken young lady, both in her former character of a coquette and romp, and in that of a prude which she at present wore—"Miss Mowbray declares for

Champagne and a chicken at last.'"

"The chicken, without the champagne, if you please," said Miss Mowbray; "I have known ladies pay dear to have champagne on the board.—By the by, Lady Penelope, you have not your collection in the same order and discipline as Pidcock and Polito. There was much growling and snarling in the lower den when I passed it."

"It was feeding time, my love," said Lady Penelope; "and the lower animals of every class become pugnacious at that hour—you see all our safer and well-conditioned animals are loose, and in good order."

"Oh, yes—in the keeper's presence, you know—Well, I must venture to cross the hall again among all that growling and grumbling—I would I had the fairy prince's quarters of mutton to toss among them if they should break out—He, I mean, who fetched water from the Fountain of Lions. However, on second thoughts, I will take the back way, and avoid them.—What says honest Bottom?—

'For if they should as lions come in strife
Into such place, 'twere pity of their life.'"

"Shall I go with you, my dear?" said Lady Penelope.

"No—I have too great a soul for that—I think some of them are lions only as far as the hide is concerned."

"But why would you go so soon, Clara?"

"Because my errand is finished—have I not invited you and yours? and would not Lord Chesterfield himself allow I have done the polite thing?"

"But you have spoken to none of the company—how can you be so odd, my love?" said her ladyship.

"Why, I spoke to them all when I spoke to you and Lady Binks—but I am a good girl, and will do as I am bid."

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So saying, she looked round the company, and addressed each of them with an affectation of interest and politeness, which thinly concealed scorn and contempt.

"Mr. Winterblossom, I hope the gout is better—Mr. Robert Rymar—(I have escaped calling him Thomas for once)—I hope the public give encouragement to the muses—Mr. Keelavine, I trust your pencil is busy—Mr. Chatterly, I have no doubt your flock improves—Dr. Quackleben, I am sure your patients recover.—These are all the especials of the worthy company I know—for the rest, health to the sick, and pleasure to the healthy."

"You are not going in reality, my love?" said Lady Penelope; "these hasty rides agitate your nerves—they do, indeed—you should be cautious—Shall I speak to Quackleben?"

"To neither quack nor quackle, on my account, my dear lady. It is not as you would seem to say, by your winking at Lady Binks—it is not, indeed—I shall be no Lady Clementina, to be the wonder and pity of the spring of St. Ronan's—No Ophelia neither—though I will say with her, Good-night, ladies—Good-night, sweet ladies!—and now—not my coach, my coach—but my horse, my horse!"

So saying, she tripped out of the room by a side passage, leaving the ladies looking at each other significantly, and shaking their heads with an expression of much import.

"Something has ruffled the poor unhappy girl," said Lady Penelope; "I never saw her so very odd before."

"Were I to speak my mind," said Lady Binks, "I think, as Mrs. Highmore says in the farce, her madness is but a poor excuse for her impertinence."

"Oh fie! my sweet Lady Binks," said Lady Penelope, "spare my poor favourite! You, surely, of all others, should forgive the excesses of an amiable eccentricity of temper.—Forgive me, my love, but I must defend an absent friend—My Lady Binks, I am very sure, is too generous and candid to

'Hate for arts which caused herself to rise.'"

"Not being conscious of any high elevation, my lady," answered Lady Binks, "I do not know any arts I have been under the necessity of practising to attain it. I suppose a Scotch lady of an ancient family may become the wife of an English baronet, and no very extraordinary great cause to wonder at it."

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"No, surely—but people in this world will, you know, wonder at nothing," answered Lady Penelope.

"If you envy me my poor quiz, Sir Bingo, I'll get you a better, Lady Pen."

"I don't doubt your talents, my dear; but when I want one, I will get one for myself.—But here comes the whole party of quizzes.—Joliffe, offer the gentlemen tea—then get the floor ready for the dancers, and set the card-tables in the next room."

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

AFTER DINNER.

They draw the cork, they broach the barrel,
And first they kiss, and then they quarrel.

PRIOR.

If the reader has attended much to the manners of the canine race, he may have remarked the very different manner in which the individuals of the different sexes carry on their quarrels among each other. The females are testy, petulant, and very apt to indulge their impatient dislike of each other's presence, or the spirit of rivalry which it produces, in a sudden bark and snap, which last is generally made as much at advantage as possible. But these ebullitions of peevishness lead to no very serious or prosecuted conflict; the affair begins and ends in a moment. Not so the ire of the male dogs, which, once produced, and excited by growls of mutual offence and defiance, leads generally to a fierce and obstinate contest; in which, if the parties be dogs of game, and well-matched, they grapple, throttle, roll each other in the kennel, and can only be separated by choking them with their own collars, till they lose wind and hold at the same time, or by surprising them out of their wrath by sousing them with cold water.

The simile, though a currish one, will hold good in its application to the human race. While the ladies in the tea-room of the Fox Hotel were engaged in the light snappish velitation, or skirmish, which we have described, the gentlemen who

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remained in the parlour were more than once like to have quarrelled more seriously.

We have mentioned the weighty reasons which induced Mr. Mowbray to look upon the stranger, whom a general invitation had brought into their society, with unfavourable prepossessions; and these were far from being abated by the demeanour of Tyrrel, which, though perfectly well bred, indicated a sense of equality, which the young Laird of St. Ronan's considered as extremely presumptuous.

As for Sir Bingo, he already began to nourish the genuine hatred always entertained by a mean spirit against an antagonist before whom it is conscious of having made a dishonourable retreat. He forgot not the manner, look, and tone, with which Tyrrel had checked his unauthorised intrusion; and though he had sunk beneath it at the moment, the recollection rankled in his heart as an affront to be avenged. As he drank his wine, courage, the want of which was, in his more sober moments, a check upon his bad temper, began to inflame his malignity, and he ventured upon several occasions to show his spleen, by contradicting Tyrrel more flatly than good manners permitted upon so short an acquaintance, and without any provocation. Tyrrel saw his ill humour, and despised it, as that of an overgrown schoolboy, whom it was not worth his while to answer according to his folly.

One of the apparent causes of the Baronet's rudeness was indeed childish enough. The company were talking of shooting, the most animating topic of conversation among Scottish country gentlemen of the younger class, and Tyrrel had mentioned something of a favourite setter, an uncommonly handsome dog, from which he had been for some time separated, but which he expected would rejoin him in the course of next week.

"A setter!" retorted Sir Bingo, with a sneer; "a pointer, I suppose you mean!"

"No, sir," said Tyrrel; "I am perfectly aware of the difference betwixt a setter and a pointer, and I know the old-fashioned setter is become unfashionable among modern sportsmen. But I love my dog as a companion, as well as for his merits in the field; and a setter is more sagacious, more attached, and fitter for his place on the hearth-rug, than a pointer—not," he added, "from any deficiency of intellects on the pointer's part, but he is generally so abused while in

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the management of brutal breakers and grooms, that he loses all excepting his professional accomplishments, of finding and standing steady to game."

"And who the d—l desires he should have more?" said Sir Bingo.

"Many people, Sir Bingo," replied Tyrrel, "have been of opinion, that both dogs and men may follow sport indifferently well, though they do happen, at the same time, to be fit for mixing in friendly intercourse in society."

"That is, for licking trenchers, and scratching copper, I suppose," said the Baronet *sotto voce;* and added, in a louder and more distinct tone,—"He never before heard that a setter was fit to follow any man's heels but a poacher's."

"You know it now then, Sir Bingo," answered Tyrrel; "and I hope you will not fall into so great a mistake again."

The Peace-maker here seemed to think his interference necessary, and, surmounting his taciturnity, made the following pithy speech:—"By Cot! and do you see, as you are looking for my opinion, I think there is no dispute in the matter—because, by Cot! it occurs to me, d'ye see, that ye are both right, by Cot! It may do fery well for my excellent friend Sir Bingo, who hath stables, and kennels, and what not, to maintain the six filthy prutes that are yelping and yowling all the tay, and all the neight too, under my window, by Cot!—And if they are yelping and yowling there, may I never die, but I wish they were yelping and yowling somewhere else. But then there is many a man who may be as cood a chentleman at the bottom as my worthy friend Sir Bingo, though it may be that he is poor; and if he is poor—and as if it might be my own case, or that of this honest chentleman, Mr. Tirl, is that a reason or a law, that he is not to keep a prute of a tog, to help him to take his sports and his pleasures? and if he has not a stable or a kennel to put the crature into, must he not keep it in his pit of ped-room, or upon his parlour hearth, seeing that Luckie Dods would make the kitchen too hot for the paist—and so, if Mr. Tirl finds a setter more fitter for his purpose than a pointer, by Cot, I know no law against it, else may I never die the black death."

If this oration appear rather long for the occasion, the reader must recollect that Captain MacTurk had in all probability the trouble of translating it from the periphrastic language

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of Ossian, in which it was originally conceived in his own mind.

The Man of Law replied to the Man of Peace, "Ye are mistaken for ance in your life, Captain, for there is a law against setters; and I will undertake to prove them to be the 'lying dogs' which are mentioned in the auld Scots statute, and which all and sundry are discharged to keep, under a penalty of"——

Here the Captain broke in, with a very solemn mien and dignified manner—"By Cot! Master Meiklewham, and I shall be asking what you mean by talking to me of peing mistaken, and apout lying togs, sir—pecause I would have you to know, and to pelieve, and to very well consider, that I never was mistaken in my life, sir, unless it was when I took you for a chentleman."

"No offence, Captain," said Mr. Meiklewham; "dinna break the wand of peace, man, you that should be the first to keep it. He is as cankered," continued the Man of Law, apart to his patron, "as an auld Hieland terrier, that snaps at whatever comes near it—but I tell you ae thing, St. Ronan's, and that is on saul and conscience, that I believe this is the very lad Tirl, that I raised a summons against before the justices—him and another hempie—in your father's time, for shooting on the Springwell-head muirs."

"The devil you did, Mick!" replied the Lord of the Manor, also aside;—"Well, I am obliged to you for giving me some reason for the ill thoughts I had of him—I knew he was some trumpery scamp—I'll blow him, by"——

"Whisht—stop—hush—haud your tongue, St. Ronan's—keep a calm sough—ye see, I intented the process, by your worthy father's desire, before the Quarter Sessions—but I ken na—The auld sheriff-clerk stood the lad's friend—and some of the justices thought it was but a mistake of the marches, and sae we couldna get a judgment—and your father was very ill of the gout, and I was feared to vex him, and so I was fain to let the process sleep, for fear they had been assoilzied.—Sae ye had better gang cautiously to work, St. Ronan's, for though they were summoned, they were not convict."

"Could you not take up the action again?" said Mr. Mowbray.

"Whew! it's been prescribed sax or seeven year syne. It

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is a great shame, St. Ronan's, that the game-laws, whilk are the very best protection that is left to country gentlemen against the encroachment of their inferiors, rin sae short a course of prescription—a poacher may just jink ye back and forward like a flea in a blanket (wi' pardon)—hap ye out of ae county and into anither at their pleasure, like pyots—and unless ye get your thumb-nail on them in the very nick o' time, ye may dine on a dish of prescription, and sup upon an absolvitor."

"It is a shame indeed," said Mowbray, turning from his confidant and agent, and addressing himself to the company in general, yet not without a peculiar look directed to Tyrrel.

"What is a shame, sir?" said Tyrrel, conceiving that the observation was particularly addressed to him.

"That we should have so many poachers upon our muirs, sir," answered St. Ronan's. "I sometimes regret having countenanced the Well here, when I think how many guns it has brought on my property every season."

"Hout fie! houtt awa, St. Ronan's!" said his Man of Law; "no countenance the Waal? What would the country-side be without it, I would be glad to ken? It's the greatest improvement that has been made on this country since the year forty-five. Na, na, it's no the Waal that's to blame for the poaching and delinquencies on the game.—We maun to the Aultoun for the howf of that kind of cattle. Our rules at the Waal are clear and express against trespassers on the game."

"I can't think," said the Squire, "what made my father sell the property of the old change-house yonder, to the hag that keeps it open out of spite, I think, and to harbour poachers and vagabonds!—I cannot conceive what made him do so foolish a thing!"

"Probably because your father wanted money, sir," said Tyrrel, drily; "and my worthy landlady, Mrs. Dods, had got some.—You know, I presume, sir, that I lodge there?"

"Oh, sir," replied Mowbray, in a tone betwixt scorn and civility, "you cannot suppose the present company is alluded to; I only presumed to mention as a fact, that we have been annoyed with unqualified people shooting on our grounds, without either liberty or license.—And I hope to have her sign taken down for it—that is all.—There was the same plague in my father's days, I think, Mick?"

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But Mr. Meiklewham, who did not like Tyrrel's looks so well as to induce him to become approver on the occasion, replied with an inarticulate grunt, addressed to the company, and a private admonition to his patron's own ear, "to let sleeping dogs lie."

"I can scarce forbear the fellow," said St. Ronan's; "and yet I cannot well tell where my dislike to him lies—but it would be d—d folly to turn out with him for nothing; and so, honest Mick, I will be as quiet as I can."

"And that you may be so," said Meiklewham, "I think you had best take no more wine."

"I think so too," said the Squire; "for each glass I drink in his company gives me the heartburn—yet the man is not different from other raffs either—but there is a something about him intolerable to me."

So saying, he pushed back his chair from the table, and—*rejis ad exemplar*—after the pattern of the Laird, all the company arose.

Sir Bingo got up with reluctance, which he testified by two or three deep growls, as he followed the rest of the company into the outer apartment, which served as an entrance-hall, and divided the dining-parlour from the tea-room, as it was called. Here, while the party were assuming their hats, for the purpose of joining the ladies' society (which old-fashioned folk used only to take up for that of going into the open air), Tyrrel asked a smart footman, who stood near, to hand him the hat which lay on the table beyond.

"Call your own servant, sir," answered the fellow, with the true insolence of a pampered menial.

"Your master," answered Tyrrel, "ought to have taught you good manners, my friend, before bringing you here."

"Sir Bingo Binks is my master," said the fellow, in the same insolent tone as before.

"Now for it, Bingie," said Mowbray, who was aware that the Baronet's pot-courage had arrived at fighting pitch.

"Yes!" said Sir Bingo aloud, and more articulately than usual.—"The fellow is my servant—what has any one to say to it?"

"I at least have my mouth stopped," answered Tyrrel, with perfect composure. "I should have been surprised to have found Sir Bingo's servant better bred than himself."

"What d'ye mean by that, sir?" said Sir Bingo, coming up

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in an offensive attitude, for he was no mean pupil of the Fives-Court—"What d'ye mean by that? D—n you, sir! I'll serve you out before you can say dumpling."

"And I, Sir Bingo, unless you presently lay aside that look and manner, will knock you down before you can cry help."

The visitor held in his hand a slip of oak, with which he gave a flourish, that, however slight, intimated some acquaintance with the noble art of single-stick. From this demonstration Sir Bingo thought it prudent somewhat to recoil, though backed by a party of friends, who, in their zeal for his honour, would rather have seen his bones broken in conflict bold, than his honour injured by a discreditable retreat; and Tyrrel seemed to have some inclination to indulge them. But, at the very instant when his hand was raised with a motion of no doubtful import, a whispering voice, close to his ear, pronounced the emphatic words—"Are you a man?"

Not the thrilling tone with which our inimitable Siddons used to electrify the scene, when she uttered the same whisper, ever had a more powerful effect upon an auditor, than had these unexpected sounds on him, to whom they were now addressed. Tyrrel forgot everything—his quarrel—the circumstances in which he was placed—the company. The crowd was to him at once annihilated, and life seemed to have no other object than to follow the person who had spoken. But suddenly as he turned, the disappearance of the monitor was at least equally so, for, amid the group of commonplace countenances by which he was surrounded, there was none which assorted to the tone and words which possessed such a power over him. "Make way," he said to those who surrounded him; and it was in the tone of one who was prepared, if necessary, to make way for himself.

Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's stepped forward. "Come, sir," said he, "this will not do—you have come here, a stranger among us, to assume airs and dignities, which, by G—d, would become a duke, or a prince! We must know who or what you are, before we permit you to carry your high tone any farther."

This address seemed at once to arrest Tyrrel's anger, and his impatience to leave the company. He turned to Mowbray, collected his thoughts for an instant, and then answered him thus:—"Mr. Mowbray, I seek no quarrel with any one here,—

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with you, in particular, I am most unwilling to have any disagreement. I came here by invitation, not certainly expecting much pleasure, but, at the same time, supposing myself secure from incivility. In the last point I find myself mistaken, and therefore wish the company good-night. I must also make my adieu to the ladies." So saying, he walked several steps, yet, as it seemed, rather irresolutely, towards the door of the card-room—and then, to the increased surprise of the company, stopped suddenly, and muttering something about the "unfitness of the time," turned on his heel, and bowing haughtily, as there was way made for him, walked in the opposite direction towards the door which led to the outer hall.

"D—n me, Sir Bingo, will you let him off?" said Mowbray, who seemed to delight in pushing his friend into new scrapes—"To him, man—to him—he shows the white feather."

Sir Bingo, thus encouraged, planted himself with a look of defiance exactly between Tyrrel and the door; upon which the retreating guest, bestowing on him most emphatically the epithet Fool, seized him by the collar, and flung him out of his way with some violence.

"I am to be found at the Old Town of St. Ronan's, by whomsoever has any concern with me."—Without waiting the issue of this aggression farther than to utter these words, Tyrrel left the hotel. He stopped in the courtyard, however, with the air of one uncertain whither he intended to go, and who was desirous to ask some question, which seemed to die upon his tongue. At length his eye fell upon a groom, who stood not far from the door of the inn, holding in his hand a handsome pony, with a side-saddle.

"Whose,"—— said Tyrrel, but the rest of the question he seemed unable to utter.

The man, however, replied, as if he had heard the whole interrogation.—"Miss Mowbray's, sir, of St. Ronan's—she leaves directly—and so I am walking the pony—a clever thing, sir, for a lady."

"She returns to Shaws Castle by the Buck-stane road?"

"I suppose so, sir," said the groom. "It is the nighest, and Miss Clara cares little for rough roads. Zounds! she can spank it over wet and dry."

Tyrrel turned away from the man, and hastily left the hotel—not, however, by the road which led to the Aultoun, but by

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a footpath among the natural copsewood, which, following the course of the brook, intersected the usual horse-road to Shaws Castle, the seat of Mr. Mowbray, at a romantic spot called the Buck-stane.

In a small peninsula, formed by a winding of the brook, was situated, on a rising hillock, a large rough-hewn pillar of stone, said by tradition to commemorate the fall of a stag of uuusual speed, size, and strength, whose flight, after having lasted through a whole summer's day, had there terminated in death, to the honour and glory of some ancient Baron of St. Ronan's, and of his stanch hounds. During the periodical cuttings of the copse, which the necessities of the family of St. Ronan's brought round more frequently than Ponty would have recommended, some oaks had been spared in the neighbourhood of this massive obelisk, old enough perhaps to have heard the whoop and halloo which followed the fall of the stag, and to have witnessed the raising of the rude monument, by which that great event was commemorated. These trees, with their broad spreading boughs, made a twilight even of noon-day, and now, that the sun was approaching its setting point, their shade already anticipated night. This was especially the case where three or four of them stretched their arms over a deep gully, through which winded the horse-path to Shaws Castle, at a point about a pistol-shot distant from the Buck-stane. As the principal access to Mr. Mowbray's mansion was by a carriage-way which passed in a different direction, the present path was left almost in a state of nature, full of large stones, and broken by gullies, delightful, from the varied character of its banks, to the picturesque traveller, and most inconvenient, nay, dangerous, to him who had a stumbling horse.

The footpath to the Buck-stane, which here joined the bridle-road, had been constructed at the expense of a subscription, under the direction of Mr. Winterblossom, who had taste enough to see the beauties of this secluded spot, which was exactly such as in earlier times might have harboured the ambush of some marauding chief. This recollection had not escaped Tyrrel, to whom the whole scenery was familiar, who now hastened to the spot, as one which peculiarly suited his present purpose. He sat down by one of the larger projecting trees, and, screened by its enormous branches from observation, was enabled to watch the road from the Hotel for a great part

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of its extent, while he was himself invisible to any who might travel upon it.

Meanwhile his sudden departure excited a considerable sensation among the party whom he had just left, and who were induced to form conclusions not very favourable to his character. Sir Bingo, in particular, blustered loudly and more loudly, in proportion to the increasing distance betwixt himself and his antagonist, declaring his resolution to be revenged on the scoundrel for his insolence—to drive him from the neighbourhood,—and I know not what other menaces of formidable import. The devil, in the old stories of *diablerie*, was always sure to start up at the elbow of any one who nursed diabolical purposes, and only wanted a little backing from the foul fiend to carry his imaginations into action. The noble Captain MacTurk had so far this property of his infernal majesty, that the least hint of an approaching quarrel drew him always to the vicinity of the party concerned. He was now at Sir Bingo's side, and was taking his own view of the matter, in his character of peace-maker.

"By Cot! and it's very exceedingly true, my good friend, Sir Binco—and as you say, it concerns your honour, and the honour of the place, and credit and character of the whole company, by Cot! that this matter be properly looked after; for, as I think, he laid hands on your body, my excellent goot friend."

"Hands, Captain MacTurk!" exclaimed Sir Bingo in some confusion; "no, blast him—not so bad as that neither—if he had, I should have handed *him* over the window—but by ——, the fellow had the impudence to offer to collar me—I had just stepped back to square at him, when, curse me, the blackguard ran away."

"Right, vara right, Sir Bingo," said the Man of Law, "a vara perfect blackguard, a poaching sorning sort of fallow, that I will have scoured out of the country before he be three days aulder. Fash you your beard nae farther about the matter, Sir Bingo."

"By Cot! but I can tell you, Mr. Meiklewham," said the Man of Peace, with great solemnity of visage, "that you are scalding your lips in other folk's kale, and that it is necessary for the credit, and honour, and respect of this company, at the Well of St. Ronan's, that Sir Binco goes by more competent advice than yours upon the present occasion, Mr. Meiklewham;

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for though your counsel may do very well in a small-debt court, here, do you see, Mr. Meiklewham, is a question of honour, which is not a thing in your line, as I take it."

"No, before George! is it not," answered Meiklewham; "e'en take it all to yoursell, Captain, and meikle ye are likely to make on't."

"Then," said the Captain, "Sir Binco, I will beg the favour of your company to the smoking room, where we may have a cigar and a glass of gin-twist; and we will consider how the honour of the company must be supported and upholden upon the present conjuncture."

The Baronet complied with this invitation, as much, perhaps, in consequence of the medium through which the Captain intended to convey his warlike counsels, as for the pleasure with which he anticipated the result of these counsels themselves. He followed the military step of his leader, whose stride was more stiff, and his form more perpendicular, when exalted by the consciousness of an approaching quarrel, to the smoking room, where, sighing as he lighted his cigar, Sir Bingo prepared to listen to the words of wisdom and valour as they should flow in mingled stream from the lips of Captain MacTurk.

Meanwhile the rest of the company joined the ladies. "Here has been Clara," said the Lady Penelope to Mr. Mowbray; "here has been Miss Mowbray among us, like the ray of a sun which does but dazzle and die."

"Ah, poor Clara," said Mowbray; "I thought I saw her thread her way through the crowd a little while since, but I was not sure."

"Well," said Lady Penelope, "she has asked us all up to Shaws Castle on Thursday, to a *déjeûner à la fourchette*—I trust you confirm your sister's invitation, Mr. Mowbray?"

"Certainly, Lady Penelope," replied Mowbray; "and I am truly glad Clara has had the grace to think of it—How we shall acquit ourselves is a different question, for neither she nor I are much accustomed to play host or hostess."

"Oh! it will be delightful, I am sure," said Lady Penelope; "Clara has a grace in everything she does; and you, Mr. Mowbray, can be a perfectly well-bred gentleman—when you please."

"That qualification is severe—Well—good manners be my

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speed—I will certainly please to do my best, when I see your ladyship at Shaws Castle, which has received no company this many a day.—Clara and I have lived a wild life of it, each in their own way."

"Indeed, Mr. Mowbray," said Lady Binks, "if I might presume to speak—I think you do suffer your sister to ride about too much without an attendant. I know Miss Mowbray rides as woman never rode before, but still an accident may happen."

"An accident?" replied Mowbray—"Ah, Lady Binks! accidents happen as frequently when ladies *have* attendants as when they are without them."

Lady Binks, who, in her maiden state, had cantered a good deal about these woods under Sir Bingo's escort, coloured, looked spiteful, and was silent.

"Besides," said John Mowbray, more lightly, "where is the risk, after all? There are no wolves in our woods to eat up our pretty Red-Riding-Hoods; and no lions either—except those of Lady Penelope's train."

"Who draw the car of Cybele," said Mr. Chatterly.

Lady Penelope luckily did not understand the allusion, which was indeed better intended than imagined.

"Apropos!" she said; "what have you done with the great lion of the day? I see Mr. Tyrrel nowhere—Is he finishing an additional bottle with Sir Bingo?"

"Mr. Tyrrel, madam," said Mowbray, "has acted successively the lion rampant and the lion passant; he has been quarrelsome, and he has run away—fled from the ire of your doughty knight, Lady Binks."

"I am sure I hope not," said Lady Binks; "my Chevalier's unsuccessful campaigns have been unable to overcome his taste for quarrels—a victory would make a fighting man of him for life."

"That inconvenience might bring its own consolations," said Winterblossom apart to Mowbray; "quarrellers do not usually live long."

"No, no," replied Mowbray, "the lady's despair, which broke out just now, even in her own despite, is quite natural—absolutely legitimate. Sir Bingo will give her no chance that way."

Mowbray then made his bow to Lady Penelope, and in answer to her request that he would join the ball or the card

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table, observed, that he had no time to lose; that the heads of the old domestics at Shaws Castle would be by this time absolutely turned, by the apprehensions of what Thursday was to bring forth; and that as Clara would certainly give no directions for the proper arrangements, it was necessary that he should take that trouble himself.

"If you ride smartly," said Lady Penelope, "you may save even a temporary alarm, by overtaking Clara, dear creature, ere she gets home—She sometimes suffers her pony to go at will along the lane, as slow as Betty Foy's."

"Ah, but then," said little Miss Digges, "Miss Mowbray sometimes gallops as if the lark was a snail to her pony—and it quite frights one to see her."

The Doctor touched Mrs. Blower, who had approached so as to be on the verge of the genteel circle, though she did not venture within it,—They exchanged sagacious looks, and a most pitiful shake of the head. Mowbray's eye happened at that moment to glance on them; and doubtless, notwithstanding their hasting to compose their countenances to a different expression, he comprehended what was passing through their minds; and perhaps it awoke a corresponding note in his own. He took his hat, and with a cast of thought upon his countenance which it seldom wore, left the apartment. A moment afterwards his horse's feet were heard spurning the pavement, as he started off at a sharp pace.

"There is something singular about these Mowbrays to-night," said Lady Penelope.—"Clara, poor dear angel, is always particular; but I should have thought Mowbray had too much worldly wisdom to be fanciful.—What are you consulting your *souvenir* for with such attention, my dear Lady Binks?"

"Only for the age of the moon," said her ladyship, putting the little tortoise-shell bound calendar into her reticule; and having done so, she proceeded to assist Lady Penelope in the arrangements for the evening.

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CHAPTER NINTH.

THE MEETING.

We meet as shadows in the land of dreams,
Which speak not but in signs.

ANONYMOUS.

BEHIND one of the old oaks which we have described in the preceding chapter, shrouding himself from observation like a hunter watching for his game, or an Indian for his enemy, but with different, very different purpose, Tyrrel lay on his breast near the Buck-stane, his eye on the horse-road which winded down the valley, and his ear alertly awake to every sound which mingled with the passing breeze, or with the ripple of the brook.

"To have met her in yonder congregated assembly of brutes and fools"—such was a part of his internal reflections,—"had been little less than an act of madness—madness almost equal in its degree to that cowardice which has hitherto prevented my approaching her, when our eventful meeting might have taken place unobserved.—But now—now—my resolution is as fixed as the place is itself favourable. I will not wait till some chance again shall throw us together, with a hundred malignant eyes to watch, and wonder, and stare, and try in vain to account for the expression of feelings which I might find it impossible to suppress.—Hark—Hark!—I hear the tread of a horse.—No—it was the changeful sound of the water rushing over the pebbles. Surely she cannot have taken the other road to Shaws Castle!—No—the sounds become distinct—her figure is visible on the path, coming swiftly forward.—Have I the courage to show myself?—I have—the hour is come, and what must be shall be."

Yet this resolution was scarcely formed ere it began to fluctuate, when he reflected upon the fittest manner of carrying it into execution. To show himself at a distance, might give the lady an opportunity of turning back and avoiding the interview which he had determined upon—to hide himself till the moment when her horse, in rapid motion, should pass his lurking-place, might be attended with danger to the rider—

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and while he hesitated which course to pursue, there was some chance of his missing the opportunity of presenting himself to Miss Mowbray at all. He was himself sensible of this, formed a hasty and desperate resolution not to suffer the present moment to escape, and, just as the ascent induced the pony to slacken its pace, Tyrrel stood in the middle of the defile, about six yards distant from the young lady.

She pulled up the reins, and stopped as if arrested by a thunderbolt.—"Clara!"—"Tyrrel!" These were the only words which were exchanged between them, until Tyrrel, moving his feet as slowly as if they had been of lead, began gradually to diminish the distance which lay betwixt them. It was then that, observing his closer approach, Miss Mowbray called out with great eagerness,—"No nearer—no nearer!—So long have I endured your presence, but if you approach me more closely, I shall be mad indeed!"

"What do you fear?" said Tyrrel, in a hollow voice—"What can you fear?" and he continued to draw nearer, until they were within a pace of each other.

Clara, meanwhile, dropping her bridle, clasped her hands together, and held them up towards Heaven, muttering, in a voice scarcely audible, "Great God!—if this apparition be formed by my heated fancy, let it pass away; if it be real, enable me to bear its presence!—Tell me, I conjure you, are you Francis Tyrrel in blood and body, or is this but one of those wandering visions that have crossed my path and glared on me, but without daring to abide my steadfast glance?"

"I am Francis Tyrrel," answered he, "in blood and body, as much as she to whom I speak is Clara Mowbray."

"Then God have mercy on us both!" said Clara, in a tone of deep feeling.

"Amen!" said Tyrrel.—"But what avails this excess of agitation?—You saw me but now, Miss Mowbray—your voice still rings in my ears—You saw me but now—you spoke to me—and that when I was among strangers—Why not preserve your composure when we are where no human eye can see—no human ear can hear?"

"Is it so?" said Clara; "and was it indeed yourself whom I saw even now?—I thought so, and something I said at the time—but my brain has been but ill settled since we last met—But I am well now—quite well—I have invited all the people

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yonder to come to Shaws Castle—my brother desired me to do it—I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Tyrrel there—though I think there is some old grudge between my brother and you."

"Alas! Clara, you mistake. Your brother I have scarcely seen," replied Tyrrel, much distressed, and apparently uncertain in what tone to address her, which might soothe, and not irritate her mental malady, of which he could now entertain no doubt.

"True—true," she said, after a moment's reflection, "my brother was then at college. It was my father, my poor father, whom you had some quarrel with.—But you will come to Shaws Castle on Thursday at two o'clock?—John will be glad to see you—he can be kind when he pleases—and then we will talk of old times—I must get on to have things ready—Good evening."

She would have passed him, but he took gently hold of the rein of her bridle.—"I will walk with you, Clara," he said; "the road is rough and dangerous—you ought not to ride fast.—I will walk along with you, and we will talk of former times now, more conveniently than in company."

"True—true—very true, Mr. Tyrrel—it shall be as you say. My brother obliges me sometimes to go into company at that hateful place down yonder; and I do so because he likes it, and because the folks let me have my own way, and come and go as I list. Do you know, Tyrrel, that very often when I am there, and John has his eye on me, I can carry it on as gaily as if you and I had never met?"

"I would to God we never had," said Tyrrel, in a trembling voice, "since this is to be the end of all!"

"And wherefore should not sorrow be the end of sin and of folly? And when did happiness come of disobedience?—And when did sound sleep visit a bloody pillow? That is what I say to myself, Tyrrel, and that is what you must learn to say too, and then you will bear your burden as cheerfully as I endure mine. If we have no more than our deserts, why should we complain?—You are shedding tears, I think—Is not that childish?—They say it is a relief—if so, weep on, and I will look another way."

Tyrrel walked on by the pony's side, in vain endeavouring to compose himself so as to reply.

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"Poor Tyrrel," said Clara, after she had remained silent for some time—"Poor Frank Tyrrel!—Perhaps you will say in your turn, poor Clara—but I am not so poor in spirit as you—the blast may bend, but it shall never break me."

There was another long pause; for Tyrrel was unable to determine with himself in what strain he could address the unfortunate young lady, without awakening recollections equally painful to her feelings, and dangerous, when her precarious state of health was considered. At length she herself proceeded:—

"What needs all this, Tyrrel?—and indeed, why came you here?—Why did I find you but now brawling and quarrelling among the loudest of the brawlers and quarrellers of yonder idle and dissipated debauchees?—You were used to have more temper—more sense. Another person—ay, another that you and I once knew—he might have committed such a folly, and he would have acted perhaps in character—But you, who pretend to wisdom—for shame, for shame!—And indeed, when we talk of that, what wisdom was there in coming hither at all?—or what good purpose can your remaining here serve?—Surely you need not come, either to renew your own unhappiness or to augment mine?"

"To augment yours—God forbid!" answered Tyrrel. "No—I came hither only because, after so many years of wandering, I longed to revisit the spot where all my hopes lay buried."

"Ay—buried is the word," she replied, "crushed down and buried when they budded fairest. I often think of it, Tyrrel; and there are times when, Heaven help me! I can think of little else.—Look at me—you remember what I was—see what grief and solitude have made me."

She flung back the veil which surrounded her riding-hat, and which had hitherto hid her face. It was the same countenance which he had formerly known in all the bloom of early beauty; but though the beauty remained, the bloom was fled for ever. Not the agitation of exercise—not that which arose from the pain and confusion of this unexpected interview, had called to poor Clara's cheek even the momentary semblance of colour. Her complexion was marble-white, like that of the finest piece of statuary.

"Is it possible?" said Tyrrel; "can grief have made such ravages?"

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"Grief," replied Clara, "is the sickness of the mind, and its sister is the sickness of the body—they are twin-sisters, Tyrrel, and are seldóm long separate. Sometimes the body's disease comes first, and dims our eyes and palsies our hands, before the fire of our mind and of our intellect is quenched. But mark me—soon after comes her cruel sister with her urn, and sprinkles cold dew on our hopes and on our loves, our memory, our recollections, and our feelings, and shows us that they cannot survive the decay of our bodily powers."

"Alas!" said Tyrrel, "is it come to this?"

"To this," she replied, speaking from the rapid and irregular train of her own ideas, rather than comprehending the purport of his sorrowful exclamation,—"to this it must ever come, while immortal souls are wedded to the perishable substance of which our bodies are composed. There is another state, Tyrrel, in which it will be otherwise—God grant our time of enjoying it were come!"

She fell into a melancholy pause, which Tyrrel was afraid to disturb. The quickness with which she spoke marked but too plainly the irregular succession of thought, and he was obliged to restrain the agony of his own feelings, rendered more acute by a thousand painful recollections, lest, by giving way to his expressions of grief, he should throw her into a still more disturbed state of mind.

"I did not think," she proceeded, that after so horrible a separation, and so many years, I could have met you thus calmly and reasonably. But although what we were formerly to each other can never be forgotten, it is now all over, and we are only friends—Is it not so?"

Tyrrel was unable to reply.

"But I must not remain here," she said, "till the evening grows darker on me.—We shall meet again, Tyrrel—meet as friends—nothing more—You will come up to Shaws Castle and see me?—no need of secrecy now—my poor father is in his grave, and his prejudices sleep with him—my brother John is kind, though he is stern and severe sometimes—Indeed, Tyrrel, I believe he loves me, though he has taught me to tremble at his frown when I am in spirits and talk too much—But he loves me, at least I think so, for I am sure I love him; and I try to go down amongst them yonder, and to endure their folly, and, all things considered, I do carry on the farce of life won-

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derfully well—We are but actors, you know, and the world but a stage."

"And ours has been a sad and tragic scene," said Tyrrel, in the bitterness of his heart, unable any longer to refrain from speech.

"It has indeed—but, Tyrrel, when was it otherwise with engagements formed in youth and in folly? You and I would, you know, become men and women while we were yet scarcely more than children—We have run, while yet in our nonage, through the passions and adventures of youth, and therefore we are now old before our day, and the winter of our life has come on ere its summer was well begun.—O Tyrrel! often and often have I thought of this!—Thought of it often? Alas! when will the time come that I shall be able to think of anything else!"

The poor young woman sobbed bitterly, and her tears began to flow with a freedom which they had not probably enjoyed for a length of time. Tyrrel walked on by the side of her horse, which now prosecuted its road homewards, unable to devise a proper mode of addressing the unfortunate young lady, and fearing alike to awaken her passions and his own. Whatever he might have proposed to say was disconcerted by the plain indications that her mind was clouded, more or less slightly, with a shade of insanity, which deranged, though it had not destroyed, her powers of judgment.

At length he asked her, with as much calmness as he could assume—if she was contented—if aught could be done to render her situation more easy—if there was aught of which she could complain which he might be able to remedy? She answered gently, that she was calm and resigned, when her brother would permit her to stay at home; but that, when she was brought into society, she experienced such a change as that which the water of the brook that slumbers in a crystalline pool of the rock may be supposed to feel, when, gliding from its quiet bed, it becomes involved in the hurry of the cataract.

"But my brother Mowbray," she said, "thinks he is right,—and perhaps he is so. There are things on which we may ponder too long;—and were he mistaken, why should I not constrain myself in order to please him?—there are so few left to whom I can now give either pleasure or pain.—I am a gay girl, too, in conversation, Tyrrel—still as gay for a moment, as when you used to chide me for my folly. So, now I have told

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you all,—I have one question to ask on my part—one question—if I had but breath to ask it—is *he* still alive?"

"He lives," answered Tyrrel, but in a tone so low, that nought but the eager attention which Miss Mowbray paid could possibly have caught such feeble sounds.

"Lives!" she exclaimed,—"lives!—he lives, and the blood on your hand is not then indelibly imprinted—O Tyrrel, did you but know the joy which this assurance gives to me!"

"Joy!" replied Tyrrel—"joy, that the wretch lives who has poisoned our happiness for ever!—lives, perhaps, to claim you for his own?"

"Never, never, shall he—dare he do so," replied Clara, wildly, "while water can drown, while cords can strangle, steel pierce—while there is a precipice on the hill, a pool in the river—never—never!"

"Be not thus agitated, my dearest Clara," said Tyrrel; "I spoke I know not what—he lives indeed—but far distant, and, I trust, never again to revisit Scotland."

He would have said more, but that, agitated with fear or passion, she struck her horse impatiently with her riding whip. The spirited animal, thus stimulated and at the same time restrained, became intractable, and reared so much, that Tyrrel, fearful of the consequences, and trusting to Clara's skill as a horsewoman, thought he best consulted her safety in letting go the rein. The animal instantly sprung forward on a broken and hilly path at a very rapid pace, and was soon lost to Tyrrel's anxious eyes.

As he stood pondering whether he ought not to follow Miss Mowbray towards Shaws Castle, in order to be satisfied that no accident had befallen her on the road, he heard the tread of a horse's feet advancing hastily in the same direction, leading from the Hotel. Unwilling to be observed at this moment, he stepped aside under the shelter of the underwood, and presently afterwards saw Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's, followed by a groom, ride hastily past his lurking-place, and pursue the same road which had been just taken by his sister. The presence of her brother seemed to assure Miss Mowbray's safety, and so removed Tyrrel's chief reason for following her. Involved in deep and melancholy reflection upon what had passed, nearly satisfied that his longer residence in Clara's vicinity could only add to her unhappiness and his own, yet unable to

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tear himself from that neighbourhood, or to relinquish feelings which had become entwined with his heart-strings, he returned to his lodgings in the Aultoun in a state of mind very little to be envied.

Tyrrel, on entering his apartment, found that it was not lighted, nor were the abigails of Mrs. Dods quite so alert as a waiter at Long's might have been to supply him with candles. Inapt at any time to exact much personal attendance, and desirous to shun at that moment the necessity of speaking to any person whatever, even on the most trifling subject, he walked down into the kitchen to supply himself with what he wanted. He did not at first observe that Mrs. Dods herself was present in this the very centre of her empire, far less that a lofty air of indignation was seated on the worthy matron's brow. At first it only vented itself in broken soliloquy and interjections; as, for example, "Vera bonny wark this!—vera creditable wark, indeed!—a decent house to be disturbed at these hours—Keep a public—as weel keep a bedlam!"

Finding these murmurs attracted no attention, the dame placed herself betwixt her guest and the door, to which he was now retiring with his lighted candle, and demanded of him what was the meaning of such behaviour.

"Of what behaviour, madam?" said her guest, repeating her question in a tone of sternness and impatience so unusual with him, that perhaps she was sorry at the moment that she had provoked him out of his usual patient indifference; nay, she might even feel intimidated at the altercation she had provoked, for the resentment of a quiet and patient person has always in it something formidable to the professed and habitual grumbler. But her pride was too great to think of a retreat, after having sounded the signal for contest, and so she continued, though in a tone somewhat lowered.

"Maister Tirl, I wad but just ask you, that are a man of sense, whether I hae ony right to take your behaviour weel? Here have you been these ten days and mair, eating the best, and drinking the best, and taking up the best room in my house; and now to think of your gaun down and taking up with yon idle hare-brained cattle at the Waal—I maun e'en be plain wi' ye—I like nane of the fair-fashioned folk that can say My Jo, and think it no; and therefore"——

"Mrs. Dods," said Tyrrel, interrupting her, "I have no time

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at present for trifles. I am obliged to you for your attention while I have been in your house; but the disposal of my time, here or elsewhere, must be according to my own ideas of pleasure or business—if you are tired of me as a guest, send in your bill to-morrow."

"My bill!" said Mrs. Dods; "my bill to-morrow! And what for no wait till Saturday, when it may be cleared atween us, plack and bawbee, as it was on Saturday last?"

"Well—we will talk of it to-morrow, Mrs. Dods—Good-night." And he withdrew accordingly.

Luckie Dods stood ruminating for a moment. "The deil's in him," she said, "for he winna bide being thrawn. And I think the deil's in me too for thrawing him, sic a canny lad, and sae gude a customer;—and I am judging he has something on his mind—want of siller it canna be—I am sure, if I thought that, I wadna care about my small thing.—But want o' siller it canna be—he pays ower the shillings as if they were sclate stanes, and that's no the way that folks part with their siller when there's but little on't—I ken weel eneugh how a customer looks that's near the grund of the purse.—Weel! I hope he winna mind onything of this nonsense the morn, and I'll try to guide my tongue something better.—Hegh, sirs! but, as the minister says, it's an unruly member—troth, I am whiles ashamed o't mysell."

CHAPTER TENTH.

RESOURCES.

Come, let me have thy counsel, for I need it;
Thou art of those, who better help their friends
With sage advice, than usurers with gold,
Or brawlers with their swords—I'll trust to thee,
For I ask only from thee words, not deeds.

THE DEVIL HATH MET HIS MATCH.

THE day of which we last gave the events chanced to be Monday, and two days therefore intervened betwixt it and that for which the entertainment was fixed, that was to assemble in the halls of the Lord of the Manor the flower of the company

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now at St. Ronan's Well. The interval was but brief for the preparations necessary on an occasion so unusual; since the house, though delightfully situated, was in very indifferent repair, and for years had never received any visitors, except when some blithe bachelor or fox-hunter shared the hospitality of Mr. Mowbray; an event which became daily more and more uncommon; for, as he himself almost lived at the Well, he generally contrived to receive his companions where it could be done without expense to himself. Besides, the health of his sister afforded an irresistible apology to any of those old-fashioned Scottish gentlemen, who might be too apt (in the rudeness of more primitive days) to consider a friend's house as their own. Mr. Mowbray was now, however, to the great delight of all his companions, nailed down, by invitation given and accepted, and they looked forward to the accomplishment of his promise, with the eagerness which the prospect of some entertaining novelty never fails to produce among idlers.

A good deal of trouble devolved on Mr. Mowbray, and his trusty agent, Mr. Meiklewham, before anything like decent preparation could be made for the ensuing entertainment; and they were left to their unassisted endeavours by Clara, who, during both the Tuesday and Wednesday, obstinately kept herself secluded; nor could her brother, either by threats or flattery, extort from her any light concerning her purpose on the approaching and important Thursday. To do John Mowbray justice, he loved his sister as much as he was capable of loving anything but himself; and when, in several arguments, he had the mortification to find that she was not to be prevailed on to afford her assistance, he, without complaint, quietly set himself to do the best he could by his own unassisted judgment or opinion with regard to the necessary preparations.

This was not, at present, so easy a task as might be supposed; for Mowbray was ambitious of that character of *ton* and elegance, which masculine faculties alone are seldom capable of attaining on such momentous occasions. The more solid materials of a collation were indeed to be obtained for money from the next market town, and were purchased accordingly; but he felt it was likely to present the vulgar plenty of a farmer's feast, instead of the elegant entertainment, which might be announced in a corner of the county paper, as given by John Mowbray, Esq. of St. Ronan's, to the gay and fashionable

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company assembled at that celebrated spring. There was likely to be all sorts of error and irregularity in dishing, and in sending up; for Shaws Castle boasted neither an accomplished housekeeper, nor a kitchenmaid with a hundred pair of hands to execute her mandates. All the domestic arrangements were on the minutest system of economy consistent with ordinary decency, except in the stables, which were excellent and well kept. But can a groom of the stables perform the labours of a groom of the chambers? or can the gamekeeper arrange in tempting order the carcasses of the birds he has shot, strew them with flowers, and garnish them with piquant sauces? It would be as reasonable to expect a gallant soldier to act as undertaker, and conduct the funeral of the enemy he has slain.

In a word, Mowbray talked, and consulted, and advised, and squabbled, with the deaf cook, and a little old man, whom he called the butler, until he at length perceived so little chance of bringing order out of confusion, or making the least advantageous impression on such obdurate understandings as he had to deal with, that he fairly committed the whole matter of the collation, with two or three hearty curses, to the charge of the officials principally concerned, and proceeded to take the state of the furniture and apartments under his consideration.

Here he found himself almost equally helpless; for what male wit is adequate to the thousand little coquetries practised in such arrangements? how can masculine eyes judge of the degree of *demi-jour* which is to be admitted into a decorated apartment, or discriminate where the broad light should be suffered to fall on a tolerable picture, where it should be excluded, lest the stiff daub of a periwigged grandsire should become too rigidly prominent? And if men are unfit for weaving such a fairy web of light and darkness as may best suit furniture, ornaments, and complexions, how shall they be adequate to the yet more mysterious office of arranging, while they disarrange, the various movables in the apartment? so that while all has the air of negligence and chance, the seats are placed as if they had been transported by a wish to the spot most suitable for accommodation; stiffness and confusion are at once avoided, the company are neither limited to a formal circle of chairs, nor exposed to break their noses over wandering stools; but the arrangements seem to correspond to what ought to be the tone of the conversation, easy, without

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being confused, and regulated, without being constrained or stiffened.

Then how can a clumsy male wit attempt the arrangement of all the *chiffonerie*, by which old snuff-boxes, heads of canes, pomander-boxes, lamer beads, and all the trash usually found in the pigeon-holes of the bureaus of old-fashioned ladies, may be now brought into play, by throwing them, carelessly grouped with other unconsidered trifles, such as are to be seen in the windows of a pawnbroker's shop, upon a marble *encognure*, or a mosaic work-table, thereby turning to advantage the trash and trinketry, which all the old maids or magpies, who have inhabited the mansion for a century, have contrived to accumulate. With what admiration of the ingenuity of the fair artist have I sometimes pried into these miscellaneous groups of *pseudo-bijouterie*, and seen the great grandsire's thumb-ring couchant with the coral and bells of the firstborn—and the boatswain's whistle of some old naval uncle, or his silver tobacco-box, redolent of Oroonoko, happily grouped with the mother's ivory comb-case, still odorous of musk, and with some virgin aunt's tortoise-shell spectacle-case, and the eagle's talon of ebony, with which, in the days of long and stiff stays, our grandmothers were wont to alleviate any little irritation in their back or shoulders! Then there was the silver strainer, on which, in more economical times than ours, the lady of the house placed the tea-leaves, after the very last drop had been exhausted, that they might afterwards be hospitably divided among the company, to be eaten with sugar, and with bread and butter. Blessings upon a fashion which has rescued from the claws of abigails, and the melting-pot of the silversmith, those neglected *cimelia*, for the benefit of antiquaries and the decoration of side-tables! But who shall presume to place them there, unless under the direction of female taste? and of that Mr. Mowbray, though possessed of a large stock of such treasures, was for the present entirely deprived.

This digression upon his difficulties is already too long, or I might mention the Laird's inexperience in the art of making the worse appear the better garnishment, of hiding a darned carpet with a new floor-cloth, and flinging an Indian shawl over a faded and threadbare sofa. But I have said enough, and more than enough, to explain his dilemma to any unassisted bachelor, who, without mother, sister, or cousin, without

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skilful housekeeper, or experienced clerk of the kitchen, or valet of parts and figure, adventures to give an entertainment, and aspires to make it elegant and *comme il faut.*

The sense of his insufficiency was the more vexatious to Mowbray, as he was aware he would find sharp critics in the ladies, and particularly in his constant rival, Lady Penelope Penfeather. He was, therefore, incessant in his exertions; and for two whole days, ordered and disordered, demanded, commanded, countermanded, and reprimanded, without pause or cessation. The companion, for he could not be termed an assistant of his labours, was his trusty agent, who trotted from room to room after him, affording him exactly the same degree of sympathy which a dog doth to his master when distressed in mind, by looking in his face from time to time with a piteous gaze, as if to assure him that he partakes of his trouble, though he neither comprehends the cause or the extent of it, nor has in the slightest degree the power to remove it.

At length, when Mowbray had got some matters arranged to his mind, and abandoned a great many which he would willingly have put in better order, he sat down to dinner upon the Wednesday preceding the appointed day, with his worthy aid-de-camp, Mr. Meiklewham; and, after bestowing a few muttered curses upon the whole concern, and the fantastic old maid who had brought them into the scrape, by begging an invitation, declared that all things might now go to the devil their own way, for, so sure as his name was John Mowbray, he would trouble himself no more about them.

Keeping this doughty resolution, he sat down to dinner with his counsel learned in the law; and speedily they despatched the dish of chops which was set before them, and the better part of the bottle of old port, which served for its menstruum.

"We are well enough now," said Mowbray, "though we have had none of their d—d kickshaws."

"A wame-fou' is a wame-fou'," said the writer, swabbing his greasy chops, "whether it be of the barleymeal or the bran."

"A cart-horse thinks so," said Mowbray; "but we must do as others do, and gentlemen and ladies are of a different opinion."

"The waur for themselves and the country baith, St. Ronan's —it's the jinketing and the jirbling wi' tea and wi' trumpery that brings our nobles to ninepence, and mony a het ha'-house to a hired lodging in the Abbey."

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The young gentleman paused for a few minutes—filled a bumper, and pushed the bottle to the senior—then said abruptly, "Do you believe in luck, Mick?"-

"In luck?" answered the attorney; "what do you mean by the question?"

"Why, because I believe in luck myself—in a good or bad run of luck at cards."

"You wad have mair luck the day, if you had never touched them," replied his confidant.

"That is not the question now," said Mowbray; "but what I wonder at is the wretched chance that has attended us miserable Lairds of St. Ronan's for more than a hundred years, that we have always been getting worse in the world, and never better. Never has there been such a backsliding generation, as the parson would say—half the country once belonged to my ancestors, and now the last furrows of it seem to be flying."

"Fleeing!" said the writer, "they are barking and fleeing baith.—This Shaws Castle here, I'se warrant it flee up the chimney after the rest, were it not weel fastened down with your grandfather's tailzie."

"D—n the tailzie!" said Mowbray; "if they had meant to keep up their estate they should have entailed it when it was worth keeping: to tie a man down to such an insignificant thing as St. Ronan's, is like tethering a horse on six roods of a Highland moor."

"Ye have broke weel in on the mailing by your feus down at the Well," said Meiklewham, "and raxed ower the tether maybe a wee bit farther than ye had ony right to do."

"It was by your advice, was it not?" said the Laird.

"I'se ne'er deny it, St. Ronan's," answered the writer; "but I am such a gude-natured guse, that I just set about pleasing you, as an auld wife pleases a bairn."

"Ay," said the man of pleasure, "when she reaches it a knife to cut its own fingers with.—These acres would have been safe enough, if it had not been for your d—d advice."

"And yet you were grumbling e'en now," said the man of business, "that you have not the power to gar the whole estate flee like a wild-duck across a bog? Troth, you need care little about it; for if you have incurred an irritancy—and sae thinks Mr. Wisebehind, the advocate, upon an A. B. memorial that I

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laid before him—your sister, or your sister's goodman, if she should take the fancy to marry, might bring a declarator, and evict St. Ronan's frae ye in the course of twa or three sessions."

"My sister will never marry," said John Mowbray.

"That's easily said," replied the writer; "but as broken a ship's come to land. If ony body kend o' the chance she has o' the estate, there's mony a weel-doing man would think little of the bee in her bonnet."

"Hark ye, Mr. Meiklewham," said the Laird, "I will be obliged to you if you will speak of Miss Mowbray with the respect due to her father's daughter, and my sister."

"Nae offence, St. Ronan's, nae offence," answered the man of law; "but ilka man maun speak sae as to be understood,—that is, when he speaks about business. Ye ken yoursell, that Miss Clara is no just like other folks; and were I you—it's my duty to speak plain—I wad e'en gie in a bit scroll of a petition to the Lords, to be appointed Curator Bonis, in respect of her incapacity to manage her own affairs."

"Meiklewham," said Mowbray, "you are a ——" and then stopped short.

"What am I, Mr. Mowbray?" said Meiklewham, somewhat sternly—"What am I? I wad be glad to ken what I am."

"A very good lawyer, I dare say," replied St. Ronan's, who was too much in the power of his agent to give way to his first impulse. "But I must tell you, that rather than take such a measure against poor Clara, as you recommend, I would give her up the estate, and become an ostler or a postilion for the rest of my life."

"Ah, St. Ronan's," said the man of law, "if you had wished to keep up the auld house, you should have taken another trade, than to become an ostler or a postilion. What ailed you, man, but to have been a lawyer as weel as other folks? My auld master had a wee bit Latin about *rerum dominos gentemque togatam*, whilk signified, he said, that all lairds should be lawyers."

"All lawyers are likely to become lairds, I think," replied Mowbray; "they purchase our acres by the thousand, and pay us, according to the old story, with a multiplepoinding, as your learned friends call it, Mr. Meiklewham."

"Weel—and mightna you have purchased as weel as other folks?"

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"Not I," replied the Laird; "I have no turn for that service, I should only have wasted bombazine on my shoulders, and flour upon my three-tailed wig—should but have lounged away my mornings in the Outer House, and my evenings at the play-house, and acquired no more law than what would have made me a wise justice at a Small-debt Court."

"If you gained little, you would have lost as little," said Meiklewham; "and albeit ye were nae great gun at the bar, ye might aye have gotten a Sheriffdom, or a Commissaryship, amang the lave, to keep the banes green; and sae ye might have saved your estate from deteriorating, if ye didna mend it muckle."

"Yes, but I could not have had the chance of doubling it, as I might have done," answered Mowbray, "had that inconstant jade, Fortune, but stood a moment faithful to me. I tell you, Mick, that I have been within this twelvemonth, worth a hundred thousand—worth fifty thousand—worth nothing, but the remnant of this wretched estate, which is too little to do one good while it is mine, though, were it sold, I could start again, and mend my hand a little."

"Ay, ay, just fling the helve after the hatchet," said his legal adviser—"that's a' you think of. What signifies winning a hundred thousand pounds, if you win them to lose them a' again?"

"What signifies it?" replied Mowbray. "Why, it signifies as much to a man of spirit, as having won a battle signifies to a general—no matter that he is beaten afterwards in his turn, he knows there is luck for him as well as others, and so he has spirit to try it again. Here is the young Earl of Etherington will be amongst us in a day or two—they say he is up to everything—if I had but five hundred to begin with, I should be soon up to him."

"Mr. Mowbray," said Meiklewham, "I am sorry for ye. I have been your house's man of business—I may say, in some measure your house's servant—and now I am to see an end of it all, and just by the lad that I thought maist likely to set it up again better than ever; for, to do ye justice, you have aye had an ee to your ain interest, sae far as your lights gaed. It brings tears into my auld een."

"Never weep for the matter, Mick," answered Mowbray; "some of it will stick, my old boy, in your pockets, if not in

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mine—your service will not be altogether gratuitous, my old friend—the labourer is worthy of his hire."

"Weel I wot is he," said the writer; "but double fees would hardly carry folk through some wark. But if ye will have siller, ye maun have siller—but, I warrant, it goes just where the rest gaed."

"No, by twenty devils!" exclaimed Mowbray, "to fail this time is impossible—Jack Wolverine was too strong for Etherington at anything he could name; and I can beat Wolverine from the Land's-End to Johnnie Groat's—but there must be something to go upon—the blunt must be had, Mick."

"Very likely—nae doubt—that is, always provided it *can* be had," answered the legal adviser.

"That's your business, my old cock," said Mowbray. "This youngster will be here perhaps to-morrow, with money in both pockets—he takes up his rents as he comes down, Mick—think of that, my old friend."

"Weel for them that have rents to take up," said Meiklewham; "ours are lying rather ower low to be lifted at present. —But are you sure this Earl is a man to mell with?—are you sure ye can win of him, and that if you do, he can pay his losings, Mr. Mowbray?—because I have kend mony ane come for wool, and gang hame shorn; and though ye are a clever young gentleman, and I am bound to suppose ye ken as much about life as most folk, and all that, yet some gate or other ye have aye come off at the losing hand, as ye have ower much reason to ken this day—howbeit"——

"Oh, the devil take your gossip, my dear Mick! If you can give no help, spare drowning me with your pother. Why, man, I was a fresh hand—had my apprentice-fees to pay—and these are no trifles, Mick.—But what of that?—I am free of the company now, and can trade on my own bottom."

"Aweel, aweel, I wish it may be sae," said Meiklewham.

"It will be so, and it shall be so, my trusty friend," replied Mowbray, cheerily, "so you will but help me to the stock to trade with."

"The stock?—what d'ye ca' the stock? I ken nae stock that ye have left."

"But *you* have plenty, my old boy—Come, sell out a few of your three per cents; I will pay difference—interest—exchange —everything."

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"Ay, ay—everything or naething," answered Meiklewham; "but as you are sae very pressing, I hae been thinking—Whan is the siller wanted?"

"This instant—this day—to-morrow at farthest!" exclaimed the proposed borrower.

"Wh—ew!" whistled the lawyer, with a long prolongation of the note; "the thing is impossible."

"It must be, Mick, for all that," answered Mr. Mowbray, who knew by experience that *impossible*, when uttered by his accommodating friend in this tone, meant only, when interpreted, extremely difficult, and very expensive.

"Then it must be by Miss Clara selling her stock, now that ye speak of stock," said Meiklewham; "I wonder ye didna think of this before."

"I wish you had been dumb rather than that you had mentioned it now," said Mowbray, starting, as if stung by an adder —"What, Clara's pittance!—the trifle my aunt left her for her own fanciful expenses—her own little private store, that she puts to so many good purposes—Poor Clara, that has so little! —And why not rather your own, Master Meiklewham, who call yourself the friend and servant of our family?"

"Ay, St. Ronan's," answered Meiklewham, "that is a' very true—but service is nae inheritance; and as for friendship, it begins at hame, as wise folks have said lang before our time. And for that matter, I think they that are nearest sib should take maist risk. You are nearer and dearer to your sister, St. Ronan's, than you are to poor Saunders Meiklewham, that hasna sae muckle gentle blood as would supper up a hungry flea."

"I will not do this," said St. Ronan's, walking up and down with much agitation; for, selfish as he was, he loved his sister, and loved her the more on account of those peculiarities which rendered his protection indispensable to her comfortable existence—"I will not," he said, "pillage her, come on't what will. I will rather go a volunteer to the Continent, and die like a gentleman."

He continued to pace the room in a moody silence, which began to disturb his companion, who had not been hitherto accustomed to see his patron take matters so deeply. At length he made an attempt to attract the attention of the silent and sullen ponderer.

"Mr. Mowbray"—no answer—"I was saying, St. Ronan's"

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—still no reply. "I have been thinking about this matter—and"——

"And *what*, sir?" said St. Ronan's, stopping short, and speaking in a stern tone of voice.

"And to speak truth I see little feasibility in the matter ony way; for if ye had the siller in your pocket to-day, it would be a' in the Earl of Etherington's the morn."

"Pshaw! you are a fool," answered Mowbray.

"That is not unlikely," said Meiklewham; "but so is Sir Bingo Binks, and yet he's had the better of you, St. Ronan's, this twa or three times."

"It is false!—he has not," answered St. Ronan's fiercely.

"Weel I wot," resumed Meiklewham, "he took you in about the saumon fish, and some other wager ye lost to him this very day."

"I tell you once more, Meiklewham, you are a fool, and no more up to my trim than your are to the longitude—Bingo is got shy—I must give him a little line, that is all—then I shall strike him to purpose—I am as sure of him as I am of the other—I know the fly they will both rise to—this cursed want of five hundred will do me out of ten thousand!"

"If you are so certain of being the bagster—so very certain, I mean, of sweeping stakes,—what harm will Miss Clara come to by your having the use of her siller? You can make it up to her for the risk ten times told."

"And so I can, by Heaven!" said St. Ronan's. "Mick, you are right, and I am a scrupulous, chicken-hearted fool. Clara shall have a thousand for her poor five hundred—she shall, by ——. And I will carry her to Edinburgh for a season, or perhaps to London, and we will have the best advice for her case, and the best company to divert her. And if they think her a little odd—why, d—n me, I am her brother, and will bear her through it. Yes—yes—you're right; there can be no hurt in borrowing five hundred of her for a few days, when such profit may be made on't, both for her and me.—Here, fill the glasses, my old boy, and drink success to it, for you are right."

"Here is success to it, with all my heart," answered Meiklewham, heartily glad to see his patron's sanguine temper arrive at this desirable conclusion, and yet willing to hedge in his own credit; "but it is *you* are right, and not *me*, for I advise nothing, except on your assurances that you can make your ain

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of this English earl, and of this Sir Bingo—and if you can but do that, I am sure it would be unwise and unkind in ony ane of your friends to stand in your light."

"True, Mick, true," answered Mowbray.—"And yet dice and cards are but bones and pasteboard, and the best horse ever started may slip a shoulder before he get to the winning-post—and so I wish Clara's venture had not been in such a bottom.—But, hang it, care killed a cat—I can hedge as well as any one, if the odds turn up against me—so let us have the cash, Mick."

"Aha! but there go two words to that bargain—the stock stands in my name, and Tam Turnpenny the banker's, as trustees for Miss Clara—Now, get you her letter to us, desiring us to sell out and to pay you the proceeds, and Tam Turnpenny will let you have five hundred pounds *instanter*, on the faith of the transaction; for I fancy you would desire a' the stock to be sold out, and it will produce more than six hundred, or seven hundred pounds either—and I reckon you will be selling out the whole—it's needless making twa bites of a cherry."

"True," answered Mowbray; "since we must be rogues, or something like it, let us make it worth our while at least; so give me a form of the letter, and Clara shall copy it—that is, if she consents; for you know she can keep her own opinion as well as any other woman in the world."

"And that," said Meiklewham, "is as the wind will keep its way, preach to us as you like. But if I might advise about Miss Clara—I wad say naething mair than that I was stressed for the penny money; for I mistake her muckle if she would like to see you ganging to pitch and toss wi' this lord and tither baronet for her aunt's three per cents—I ken she has some queer notions—she gives away the feck of the dividends on that very stock in downright charity."

"And I am in hazard to rob the poor as well as my sister!" said Mowbray, filling once more his own glass and his friend's. "Come, Mick, no skylights—here is Clara's health—she is an angel—and I am—what I will not call myself, and suffer no other man to call me.—But I shall win this time—I am sure I shall, since Clara's fortune depends upon it."

"Now, I think, on the other hand," said Meiklewham, "that if anything should chance wrang (and Heaven kens that the best-laid schemes will gang ajee), it will be a great

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comfort to think that the ultimate losers will only be the poor folk, that have the parish between them and absolute starvation —if your sister spent her ain siller, it would be a very different story."

"Hush, Mick—for God's sake, hush, mine honest friend," said Mowbray; "it is quite true; thou art a rare counsellor, in time of need, and hast as happy a manner of reconciling a man's conscience with his necessities, as might set up a score of casuists; but beware, my most zealous counsellor and confessor, how you drive the nail too far—I promise you some of the chaffing you are at just now rather abates my pluck.—Well—give me your scroll—I will to Clara with it—though I would rather meet the best shot in Britain, with ten paces of green sod betwixt us." So saying, he left the apartment.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

FRATERNAL LOVE.

Nearest of blood should still be next in love;
And when I see these happy children playing,
While William gathers flowers for Ellen's ringlets,
And Ellen dresses flies for William's angle,
I scarce can think, that in advancing life,
Coldness, unkindness, interest, or suspicion,
Will e'er divide that unity so sacred,
Which Nature bound at birth.

ANONYMOUS.

WHEN Mowbray had left his dangerous adviser, in order to steer the course which his agent had indicated, without offering to recommend it, he went to the little parlour which his sister was wont to term her own, and in which she spent great part of her time. It was fitted up with a sort of fanciful neatness; and in its perfect arrangement and good order, formed a strong contrast to the other apartments of the old and neglected mansion-house. A number of little articles lay on the work-table, indicating the elegant, and, at the same time, the unsettled turn of the inhabitant's mind. There were unfinished drawings, blotted music, needle-work of various kinds, and

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many other little female tasks; all undertaken with zeal, and so far prosecuted with art and elegance, but all flung aside before any one of them was completed.

Clara herself sat upon a little low couch by the window, reading, or at least turning over the leaves of a book, in which she seemed to read. But instantly starting up when she saw her brother, she ran towards him with the most cordial cheerfulness.

"Welcome, welcome, my dear John; this is very kind of you to come to visit your recluse sister. I have been trying to nail my eyes and my understanding to a stupid book here, because they say too much thought is not quite good for me. But, either the man's dulness, or my want of the power of attending, makes my eyes pass over the page, just as one seems to read in a dream, without being able to comprehend one word of the matter. You shall talk to me, and that will do better. What can I give you to show that you are welcome? I am afraid tea is all I have to offer, and that you set too little store by."

"I shall be glad of a cup at present," said Mowbray, "for I wish to speak with you."

"Then Jessie shall make it ready instantly," said Miss Mowbray, ringing, and giving orders to her waiting-maid—"but you must not be ungrateful, John, and plague me with any of the ceremonial for your fête—'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' I will attend, and play my part as prettily as you can desire; but to think of it beforehand would make both my head and my heart ache; and so I beg you will spare me on the subject."

"Why, you wild kitten," said Mowbray, "you turn every day more shy of human communication—we shall have you take the woods one day, and become as savage as the Princess Caraboo. But I will plague you about nothing if I can help it. If matters go not smooth on the great day, they must e'en blame the dull thick head that had no fair lady to help him in his need. But, Clara, I had something more material to say to you—something indeed of the last importance."

"What is it?" said Clara, in a tone of voice approaching to a scream—"In the name of God, what is it? You know not how you terrify me!"

"Nay, you start at a shadow, Clara," answered her brother.

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"It is no such uncommon matter neither—good faith, it is the most common distress in the world, so far as I know the world—I am sorely pinched for money."

"Is that all?" replied Clara, in a tone which seemed to her brother as much to underrate the difficulty, when it was explained, as her fears had exaggerated it before she heard its nature.

"Is that all? Indeed it is all, and comprehends a great deal of vexation. I shall be hard run unless I can get a certain sum of money—and I must e'en ask you if you can help me?"

"Help you?" replied Clara; "Yes, with all my heart—but you know my purse is a light one—more than half of my last dividend is in it, however, and I am sure, John, I shall be happy if it can serve you—especially as that will at least show that your wants are but small ones."

"Alas, Clara, if you would help me," said her brother, half repentant of his purpose, "you must draw the neck of the goose which lays the golden eggs—you must lend me the whole stock."

"And why not, John," said the simple-hearted girl, "if it will do you a kindness? Are you not my natural guardian? Are you not a kind one? And is not my little fortune entirely at your disposal? You will, I am sure, do all for the best."

"I fear I may not," said Mowbray, starting from her, and more distressed by her sudden and unsuspicious compliance, than he would have been by difficulties or remonstrance. In the latter case, he would have stifled the pangs of conscience amid the manœuvres which he must have resorted to for obtaining her acquiescence; as matters stood, there was all the difference between slaughtering a tame and unresisting animal, and pursuing wild game, until the animation of the sportsman's exertions overcomes the internal sense of his own cruelty. The same idea occurred to Mowbray himself.

"By G—," he said, "this is like shooting the bird sitting,—Clara," he added, "I fear this money will scarce be employed as you would wish."

"Employ it as you yourself please, my dearest brother," she replied, "and I will believe it is all for the best."

"Nay, I am doing for the best," he replied; "at least, I am doing what must be done, for I see no other way through it—

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so all you have to do is to copy this paper, and bid adieu to bank dividends—for a little while at least. I trust soon to double this little matter for you, if Fortune will but stand my friend."

"Do not trust to Fortune, John," said Clara, smiling, though with an expression of deep melancholy. "Alas! she has never been a friend to our family—not at least for many a day."

"She favours the bold, say my old grammatical exercises," answered her brother; "and I must trust her, were she as changeable as a weathercock.—And yet—if she should jilt me! —What will you do—what will you say, Clara, if I am unable, contrary to my hope, trust, and expectation, to repay you this money within a short time?"

"Do!" replied Clara; "I must do without it, you know; and for saying, I will not say a word."

"True," replied Mowbray, "but your little expenses—your charities—your halt and blind—your round of paupers?"

"Well, I can manage all that too. Look you here, John, how many half-worked trifles there are. The needle or the pencil is the resource of all distressed heroines, you know; and I promise you, though I have been a little idle and unsettled of late, yet, when I do set about it, no Emmeline or Etheline of them all ever sent such loads of trumpery to market as I shall, or made such wealth as I will do. I dare say Lady Penelope, and all the gentry at the Well, will purchase, and will raffle, and do all sorts of things to encourage the pensive performer. I will send them such lots of landscapes with sap-green trees, and mazareen-blue rivers, and portraits that will terrify the originals themselves—and handkerchiefs and turbans, with needle-work scalloped exactly like the walks on the Belvidere —Why, I shall become a little fortune in the first season."

"No, Clara," said John, gravely, for a virtuous resolution had gained the upper hand in his bosom, while his sister ran on in this manner.—"We will do something better than all this. If this kind help of yours does not fetch me through, I am determined I will cut the whole concern. It is but standing a laugh or two, and hearing a gay fellow say, Dammie, Jack, are you turned clodhopper at last!—that is the worst. Dogs, horses, and all, shall go to the hammer; we will keep nothing but your pony, and I will trust to a pair of excellent legs. There is enough left of the old acres to keep us in the way you like best,

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and that I will learn to like. I will work in the garden, and work in the forest, mark my own trees, and cut them myself, keep my own accounts, and send Saunders Meiklewham to the devil."

"That last is the best resolution of all, John," said Clara; "and if such a day should come round, I should be the happiest of living creatures—I should not have a grief left in the world—if I had, you should never see or hear of it—it should lie here," she said, pressing her hand on her bosom, "buried as deep as a funeral urn in a cold sepulchre. Oh! could we not begin such a life to-morrow? If it is absolutely necessary that this trifle of money should be got rid of first, throw it into the river, and think you have lost it amongst gamblers and horse-jockeys."

Clara's eyes, which she fondly fixed on her brother's face, glowed through the tears which her enthusiasm called into them, while she thus addressed him. Mowbray, on his part, kept his looks fixed on the ground, with a flush on his cheek, that expressed at once false pride and real shame.

At length he looked up:—"My dear girl," he said, "how foolishly you talk, and how foolishly I, that have twenty things to do, stand here listening to you! All will go smooth on *my* plan—if it should not, we have yours in reserve, and I swear to you I will adopt it. The trifle which this letter of yours enables me to command, may have luck in it, and we must not throw up the cards while we have a chance of the game—Were I to cut from this moment, these few hundreds would make us little better or little worse—So you see we have two strings to our bow. Luck is sometimes against me, that is true—but upon true principle, and playing on the square, I can manage the best of them, or my name is not Mowbray. Adieu, my dearest Clara." So saying, he kissed her cheek with a more than usual degree of affection.

Ere he could raise himself from his stooping posture, she threw her arm kindly over his neck, and said with a tone of the deepest interest, "My dearest brother, your slightest wish has been, and ever shall be, a law to me—Oh! if you would but grant me one request in return!"

"What is it, you silly girl?" said Mowbray, gently disengaging himself from her hold.—"What is it you can have to ask that needs such a solemn preface?—Remember, I hate

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prefaces; and when I happen to open a book, always skip them."

"Without preface, then, my dearest brother, will you, for my sake, avoid those quarrels in which the people yonder are eternally engaged? I never go down there but I hear of some new brawl; and I never lay my head down to sleep, but I dream that you are the victim of it. Even last night"——

"Nay, Clara, if you begin to tell your dreams, we shall never have done. Sleeping, to be sure, is the most serious employment of your life—for as to eating, you hardly match a sparrow; but I entreat you to sleep without dreaming, or to keep your visions to yourself.—Why do you keep such fast hold of me?—What on earth can you be afraid of?—Surely you do not think the blockhead Binks, or any other of the good folks below yonder, dared to turn on me? Egad, I wish they would pluck up a little mettle, that I might have an excuse for drilling them. Gad, I would soon teach them to follow at heel."

"No, John," replied his sister; "it is not of such men as these that I have any fear—and yet, cowards are sometimes driven to desperation, and become more dangerous than better men—but it is not such as these that I fear. But there are men in the world whose qualities are beyond their seeming—whose spirit and courage lie hidden, like metals in the mine, under an unmarked or a plain exterior.—You may meet with such—you are rash and headlong, and apt to exercise your wit without always weighing consequences, and thus"——

"On my word, Clara," answered Mowbray, "you are in a most sermonising humour this morning! the parson himself could not have been more logical or profound. You have only to divide your discourse into heads, and garnish it with conclusions for use, and conclusions for doctrine, and it might be preached before a whole presbytery, with every chance of instruction and edification. But I am a man of the world, my little Clara; and though I wish to go in death's way as little as possible, I must not fear the raw head and bloody bones neither.—And who the devil is to put the question to me?—I must know that, Clara, for you have some especial person in your eye when you bid me take care of quarrelling."

Clara could not become paler than was her usual complexion; but her voice faltered as she eagerly assured her brother, that she had no particular person in her thoughts.

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"Clara," said her brother, "do you remember, when there was a report of a bogle* in the upper orchard, when we were both children?—Do you remember how you were perpetually telling me to take care of the bogle, and keep away from its haunts?—And do you remember my going on purpose to detect the bogle, finding the cow-boy, with a shirt about him, busied in pulling pears, and treating him to a handsome drubbing?—I am the same Jack Mowbray still, as ready to face danger, and unmask imposition; and your fears, Clara, will only make me watch more closely, till I find out the real object of them. If you warn me of quarrelling with some one, it must be because you know some one who is not unlikely to quarrel with me. You are a flighty and fanciful girl, but you have sense enough not to trouble either yourself or me on a point of honour, save when there is some good reason for it."

Clara once more protested, and it was with the deepest anxiety to be believed, that what she had said arose only out of the general consequences which she apprehended from the line of conduct her brother had adopted, and which, in her apprehension, was so likely to engage him in the broils that divided the good company at the spring. Mowbray listened to her explanation with an air of doubt, or rather incredulity, sipped a cup of tea which had for some time been placed before him; and at length replied, "Well, Clara, whether I am right or wrong in my guess, it would be cruel to torment you any more, remembering what you have just done for me. But do justice to your brother, and believe, that when you have anything to ask of him, an explicit declaration of your wishes will answer your purpose much better than any ingenious oblique attempts to influence me. Give up all thoughts of such, my dear Clara—you are but a poor manœuvrer, but were you the very Machiavel of your sex, you should not turn the flank of John Mowbray."

He left the room as he spoke, and did not return, though his sister twice called upon him. It is true that she uttered the word brother so faintly, that perhaps the sound did not reach his ears.—"He is gone," she said, "and I have had no power to speak out! I am like the wretched creatures, who, it is said, lie under a potent charm, that prevents them alike from shedding tears and from confessing their crimes—Yes, there is a spell on this unhappy heart, and either that must be dissolved, or this must break."

* Bogle—in English, Goblin.

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CHAPTER TWELFTH.

THE CHALLENGE

A slight note I have about me, for the delivery of which you must excuse me. It is an office which friendship calls upon me to do, and no way offensive to you, as I desire nothing but right on both sides.

KING AND NO KING.

THE intelligent reader may recollect that Tyrrel departed from the Fox Hotel on terms not altogether so friendly towards the company as those under which he entered it. Indeed, it occurred to him, that he might probably have heard something farther on the subject, though, amidst matters of deeper and more anxious consideration, the idea only passed hastily through his mind; and two days having gone over without any message from Sir Bingo Binks, the whole affair glided entirely out of his memory.

The truth was, that although never old woman took more trouble to collect and blow up with her bellows the embers of her decayed fire, than Captain MacTurk kindly underwent for the purpose of puffing into a flame the dying sparkles of the Baronet's courage, yet two days were spent in fruitless conferences before he could attain the desired point. He found Sir Bingo on these different occasions in all sorts of different moods of mind, and disposed to view the thing in all shades of light, except what the Captain thought was the true one.—He was in a drunken humour—in a sullen humour—in a thoughtless and vilipending humour—in every humour but a fighting one. And when Captain MacTurk talked of the reputation of the company at the Well, Sir Bingo pretended to take offence, said the company might go to the devil, and hinted that he "did them sufficient honour by gracing them with his countenance, but did not mean to constitute them any judges of his affairs. The fellow was a raff, and he would have nothing to do with him."

Captain MacTurk would willingly have taken measures against the Baronet himself, as in a state of contumacy, but was opposed by Winterblossom and other members of the committee, who considered Sir Bingo as too important and illustrious a member of their society to be rashly expelled from a place not honoured

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by the residence of many persons of rank; and finally insisted that nothing should be done in the matter without the advice of Mowbray, whose preparations for his solemn festival on the following Thursday had so much occupied him, that he had not lately appeared at the Well.

In the meanwhile, the gallant Captain seemed to experience as much distress of mind, as if some stain had lain on his own most unblemished of reputations. He went up and down upon the points of his toes, rising up on his instep with a jerk which at once expressed vexation and defiance—He carried his nose turned up in the air, like that of a pig when he snuffs the approaching storm—He spoke in monosyllables when he spoke at all; and—what perhaps illustrated in the strongest manner the depth of his feelings—he refused, in face of the whole company, to pledge Sir Bingo in a glass of the Baronet's peculiar cognac.

At length, the whole Well was alarmed by the report brought by a smart outrider, that the young Earl of Etherington, reported to be rising on the horizon of fashion as a star of the first magnitude, intended to pass an hour, or a day, or a week, as it might happen (for his lordship could not be supposed to know his own mind), at St. Ronan's Well.

This suddenly put all in motion. Almanacs were opened to ascertain his lordship's age, inquiries were made concerning the extent of his fortune, his habits were quoted, his tastes were guessed at, and all that the ingenuity of the Managing Committee could devise was resorted to, in order to recommend their Spa to this favourite of fortune. An express was despatched to Shaws Castle with the agreeable intelligence which fired the train of hope that led to Mowbray's appropriation of his sister's capital. He did not, however, think proper to obey the summons to the Spring; for, not being aware in what light the Earl might regard the worthies there assembled, he did not desire to be found by his lordship in any strict connection with them.

Sir Bingo Binks was in a different situation. The bravery with which he had endured the censure of the place began to give way, when he considered that a person of such distinction as that which public opinion attached to Lord Etherington, should find him bodily indeed at St. Ronan's, but, so far as society was concerned, on the road towards the ancient city of

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Coventry; and his banishment thither, incurred by that most unpardonable offence in modern morality, a solecism in the code of honour. Though sluggish and inert when called to action, the Baronet was by no means an absolute coward; or, if so, he was of that class which fights when reduced to extremity. He manfully sent for Captain MacTurk, who waited upon him with a grave solemnity of aspect, which instantly was exchanged for a radiant joy, when Sir Bingo, in few words, empowered him to carry a message to that d—d strolling artist, by whom he had been insulted three days since.

"By Cot," said the Captain, "my exceedingly goot and excellent friend, and I am happy to do such a favour for you! and it's well you have thought of it yourself; because, if it had not been for some of our very goot and excellent friends, that would be putting their spoon into another folk's dish, I should have been asking you a civil question myself, how you came to dine with us, with all that mud and mire which Mr. Tyrrel's grasp has left upon the collar of your coat—you understand me. —But it is much better as it is, and I will go to the man with all the speed of light; and though, to be sure, it should have been sooner thought of, yet let me alone to make an excuse for that, just in my own civil way—better late thrive than never do well, you know, Sir Bingo; and if you have made him wait a little while for his morning, you must give him the better measure, my darling."

So saying, he awaited no reply, lest peradventure the commission with which he was so hastily and unexpectedly charged, should have been clogged with some condition of compromise. No such proposal, however, was made on the part of the doughty Sir Bingo, who eyed his friend, as he hastily snatched up his ratan to depart, with a dogged look of obstinacy, expressive, to use his own phrase, of a determined resolution to come up to the scratch; and when he heard the Captain's parting footsteps, and saw the door shut behind him, he valiantly whistled a few bars of Jenny Sutton, in token he cared not a farthing how the matter was to end.

With a swifter pace than his half-pay leisure usually encouraged, or than his habitual dignity permitted, Captain MacTurk cleared the ground betwixt the Spring and its gay vicinity, and the ruins of the Aultoun, where reigned our friend Meg Dods, the sole assertor of its ancient dignities. To the

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door of the Cleikum Inn the Captain addressed himself as one too much accustomed to war to fear a rough reception; although at the very first aspect of Meg, who presented her person at the half-opened door, his military experience taught him that his entrance into the place would, in all probability, be disputed.

"Is Mr. Tyrrel at home?" was the question; and the answer was conveyed by the counter-interrogation, "Wha may ye be that speers?"

As the most polite reply to this question, and an indulgence, at the same time, of his own taciturn disposition, the Captain presented to Luckie Dods the fifth part of an ordinary playing card, much grimed with snuff, which bore on its blank side his name and quality. But Luckie Dods rejected the information thus tendered, with contemptuous scorn.

"Nane of your deil's play-books for me," said she; "it's an ill world since sic prick-my-dainty doings came in fashion—It's a poor tongue that canna tell its ain name, and I'll hae nane of your scarts upon pasteboard."

"I am Captain MacTurk of the —— regiment," said the Captain, disdaining farther answer.

"MacTurk?" repeated Meg, with an emphasis, which induced the owner of the name to reply,

"Yes, honest woman—MacTurk—Hector MacTurk—have you any objections to my name, good wife?"

"Nae objections have I," answered Meg; "its e'en an excellent name for a heathen.—But, Captain MacTurk, since sae it be that ye are a captain, ye may e'en face about and march your ways hame again, to the tune of Dumbarton drums; for ye are ganging to have nae speech of Maister Tirl, or ony lodger of mine."

"And wherefore not?" demanded the veteran; "and is this of your own foolish head, honest woman, or has your lodger left such orders?"

"Maybe he has and maybe no," answered Meg, sturdily; "and I ken nae mair right that ye suld ca' me honest woman, than I have to ca' you honest man, whilk is as far frae my thoughts as it wad be from Heaven's truth."

"The woman is deleerit!" said Captain MacTurk; "but coom, coom—a gentleman is not to be misused in this way when he comes on a gentleman's business; so make you a bit

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room on the doorstane, that I may pass by you, or I will make room for myself, by Cot, to your small pleasure."

And so saying, he assumed the air of a man who was about to make good his passage. But Meg, without deigning farther reply, flourished around her head the hearth-broom, which she had been employing to its more legitimate purpose, when disturbed in her housewifery by Captain MacTurk.

"I ken your errand weel eneugh, Captain—and I ken yersell. Ye are ane of the folk that gang about yonder setting folks by the lugs, as callants set their collies to fight. But ye sall come to nae lodger o' mine, let a-be Maister Tirl, wi' ony sic ungodly errand; for I am ane that will keep God's peace and the King's within my dwelling."

So saying, and in explicit token of her peaceable intentions, she again flourished her broom.

The veteran instinctively threw himself under Saint George's guard, and drew two paces back, exclaiming, "That the woman was either mad, or as drunk as whisky could make her;" an alternative which afforded Meg so little satisfaction, that she fairly rushed on her retiring adversary, and began to use her weapon to fell purpose.

"Me drunk, ye scandalous blackguard!" (a blow with the broom interposed as parenthesis), "me, that am fasting from all but sin and bohea!" (another whack).

The Captain, swearing, exclaiming, and parrying, caught the blows as they fell, showing much dexterity in single stick. The people began to gather; and how long his gallantry might have maintained itself against the spirit of self-defence and revenge must be left uncertain, for the arrival of Tyrrel, returned from a short walk, put a period to the contest.

Meg, who had a great respect for her guest, began to feel ashamed of her own violence, and slunk into the house; observing, however, that she trowed she had made her hearth-broom and the auld heathen's pow right weel acquainted. The tranquillity which ensued upon her departure gave Tyrrel an opportunity to ask the Captain, whom he at length recognised, the meaning of this singular affray, and whether the visit was intended for him; to which the veteran replied, very discomposedly, that "he should have known that long enough ago, if he had had decent people to open his door, and answer a civil question, instead of a flyting madwoman, who was worse than an eagle," he said, "or a

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mastiff-bitch, or a she-bear, or any other female beast in the creation."

Half suspecting his errand, and desirous to avoid unnecessary notoriety, Tyrrel, as he showed the Captain to the parlour which he called his own, entreated him to excuse the rudeness of his landlady, and to pass from the topic to that which had procured him the honour of this visit.

"And you are right, my good Master Tyrrel," said the Captain, pulling down the sleeves of his coat, adjusting his handkerchief and breast-ruffle, and endeavouring to recover the composure of manner becoming his mission, but still adverting indignantly to the usage he had received—"By ——, if she had but been a man, if it were the King himself—However, Mr. Tyrrel, I am come on a civil errand—and very civilly I have been treated—the auld bitch should be set in the stocks, and be tamned!—My friend, Sir Bingo—By ——, I shall never forget that woman's insolence—if there be a constable or a cat-o'-nine-tails within ten miles"——

"I perceive, Captain," said Tyrrel, "that you are too much disturbed at this moment to enter upon the business which has brought you here—if you will step into my bedroom, and make use of some cold water and a towel, it will give you the time to compose yourself a little."

"I shall do no such thing, Mr. Tyrrel," answered the Captain, snappishly; "I do not want to be composed at all, and I do not want to stay in this house a minute longer than to do my errand to you on my friend's behalf—And as for this tamned woman, Dods"——

"You will in that case forgive my interrupting you, Captain MacTurk, as I presume your errand to me can have no reference to this strange quarrel with my landlady, with which I have nothing to"——

"And if I thought that it had, sir," said the Captain, interrupting Tyrrel in his turn, "you should have given me satisfaction before you was a quarter of an hour older—Oh, I would give five pounds to the pretty fellow that would say, Captain MacTurk, the woman did right!"

"I certainly will not be that person you wish for, Captain," replied Tyrrel, "because I really do not know who was in the right or wrong; but I am certainly sorry that you should have met with ill usage, when your purpose was to visit me."

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"Well, sir, if you are concerned," said the man of peace, snappishly, "so am I, and there is an end of it.—And touching my errand to you—you cannot have forgotten that you treated my friend, Sir Bingo Binks, with singular incivility?"

"I recollect nothing of the kind, Captain," replied Tyrrel. "I remember that the gentleman, so called, took some uncivil liberties in laying foolish bets concerning me, and that I treated him, from respect to the rest of the company, and the ladies in particular, with a great degree of moderation and forbearance."

"And you must have very fine ideas of forbearance," replied the Captain, "when you took my good friend by the collar of the coat, and lifted him out of your way, as if he had been a puppy dog! My good Mr. Tyrrel, I can assure you he does not think that you have forborne him at all, and he has no purpose to forbear you; and I must either carry back a sufficient apology, or you must meet in a quiet way, with a good friend on each side.—And this was the errand I came on, when this tamned woman, with the hearth-broom, who is an enemy to all quiet and peaceable proceedings"——

"We will forget Mrs. Dods for the present, if you please, Captain MacTurk," said Tyrrel—"and, to speak to the present subject, you will permit me to say, that I think this summons comes a little of the latest. You know best as a military man, but I have always understood that such differences are usually settled immediately after they occur—not that I intend to baulk Sir Bingo's inclinations upon the score of delay, or any other account."

"I dare say you will not—I dare say you will not, Mr. Tyrrel," answered the Captain—"I am free to think that you know better what belongs to a gentleman.—And as to time—look you, my good sir, there are different sorts of people in this world, as there are different sorts of firearms. There are your hair-trigger'd rifles, that go off just at the right moment, and in the twinkling of an eye, and that, Mr. Tyrrel, is your true man of honour;—and there is a sort of person that takes a thing up too soon, and sometimes backs out of it, like your rubbishy Birmingham pieces, that will at one time go off at half-cock, and at another time burn priming without going off at all;—then again there are pieces that hang fire—or I should rather say, that are like the matchlocks which the black fellows use in the East Indies—there must be some blowing of the

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match, and so forth, which occasions delay, but the piece carries true enough after all."

And your friend Sir Bingo's valour is of this last kind, Captain—I presume that is the inference. I should have thought it more like a boy's cannon, which is fired by means of a train, and is but a pop-gun after all."

"I cannot allow of such comparisons, sir," said the Captain; "you will understand that I come here as Sir Bingo's friend, and a reflection on him will be an affront to me."

"I disclaim all intended offence to you, Captain—I have no wish to extend the number of my adversaries, or to add to them the name of a gallant officer like yourself," replied Tyrrel.

"You are too obliging, sir," said the Captain, drawing himself up with dignity. "By ——, and that was said very handsomely!—Well, sir, and shall I not have the pleasure of carrying back any explanation from you to Sir Bingo?—I assure you it would give me pleasure to make this matter handsomely up."

"To Sir Bingo, Captain MacTurk, I have no apology to offer—I think I treated him more gently than his impertinence deserved."

"Och, och!" sighed the Captain, with a strong Highland intonation; "then there is no more to be said, but just to settle time and place; for pistols, I suppose, must be the weapons."

"All these matters are quite the same to me," said Tyrrel; "only, in respect of time, I should wish it to be as speedy as possible—What say you to one, afternoon, this very day—You may name the place."

"At one, afternoon," replied the Captain, deliberately, "Sir Bingo will attend you—the place may be the Buck-stane; for as the whole company go to the water-side to-day to eat a kettle of fish,* there will be no risk of interruption.—And whom shall I speak to, my good friend, on your side of the quarrel?"

"Really, Captain," replied Tyrrel, "that is a puzzling question—I have no friend here—I suppose you could hardly act for both?"

"It would be totally, absolutely, and altogether out of the question, my good friend," replied MacTurk. "But if you will trust to me, I will bring up a friend on your part from the Well, who, though you have hardly seen him before, will settle

* Note D. Kettle of fish.

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matters for you as well as if you had been intimate for twenty years—and I will bring up the Doctor too, if I can get him unloosed from the petticoat of that fat widow Blower, that he has strung himself upon."

"I have no doubt you will do everything with perfect accuracy, Captain. At one o'clock, then, we meet at the Buck-stane—Stay, permit me to see you to the door."

"By ——, and it is not altogether so unnecessary," said the Captain; "for the tamned woman with the besom might have some advantage in that long dark passage, knowing the ground better than I do—tamn her, I will have amends on her, if there be whipping-post, or ducking-stool, or a pair of stocks in the parish!" And so saying, the Captain trudged off, his spirits ever and anon agitated by recollection of the causeless aggression of Meg Dods, and again composed to a state of happy serenity by the recollection of the agreeable arrangement which he had made between Mr. Tyrrel and his friend Sir Bingo Binks.

We have heard of men of undoubted benevolence of character and disposition, whose principal delight was to see a miserable criminal, degraded alike by his previous crimes, and the sentence which he had incurred, conclude a vicious and wretched life, by an ignominious and painful death. It was some such inconsistency of character which induced honest Captain MacTurk, who had really been a meritorious officer, and was a good-natured, honourable, and well-intentioned man, to place his chief delight in setting his friends by the ears, and then acting as umpire in the dangerous rencontres, which, according to his code of honour, were absolutely necessary to restore peace and cordiality. We leave the explanation of such anomalies to the labours of craniologists, for they seem to defy all the researches of the Ethic philosopher.

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CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

Evans.—I pray you now, good Master Slender's serving-man, and friend Simple by your name, which way have you looked for Master Caius?
Slender.—Marry, Sir, the City-ward, the Park-ward, every way; Old Windsor way, and every way.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

SIR BINGO BINKS received the Captain's communication with the same dogged sullenness he had displayed at sending the challenge; a most ungracious *humph*, ascending, as it were, from the very bottom of his stomach, through the folds of a Belcher handkerchief, intimating his acquiescence, in a tone nearly as gracious as that with which the drowsy traveller acknowledges the intimation of the slip-shod ostler, that it is on the stroke of five, and the horn will sound in a minute. Captain MacTurk by no means considered this ejaculation as expressing a proper estimate of his own trouble and services. "Humph?" he replied; "and what does that mean, Sir Bingo? Have not I here had the trouble to put you just into the neat road; and would you have been able to make a handsome affair out of it at all, after you had let it hang so long in the wind, if I had not taken on myself to make it agreeable to the gentleman, and cooked as neat a mess out of it as I have seen a Frenchman do out of a stale sprat?"

Sir Bingo saw it was necessary to mutter some intimation of acquiescence and acknowledgment, which, however inarticulate, was sufficient to satisfy the veteran, to whom the adjustment of a personal affair of this kind was a labour of love, and who now, kindly mindful of his promise to Tyrrel, hurried away as if he had been about the most charitable action upon earth, to secure the attendance of some one as a witness on the stranger's part.

Mr. Winterblossom was the person whom MacTurk had in his own mind pitched upon as the fittest person to perform this act of benevolence, and he lost no time in communicating his wish to that worthy gentleman. But Mr. Winterblossom, though a man of the world, and well enough acquainted with such matters, was by no means so passionately addicted to them as was the

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man of peace, Captain Hector MacTurk. As a *bon vivant*, he hated trouble of any kind, and the shrewd selfishness of his disposition enabled him to foresee that a good deal might accrue to all concerned in the course of this business. He therefore coolly replied, that he knew nothing of Mr. Tyrrel—not even whether he was a gentleman or not; and, besides, he had received no regular application in his behalf—he did not, therefore, feel himself at all inclined to go to the field as his second. This refusal drove the poor Captain to despair. He conjured his friend to be more public-spirited, and entreated him to consider the reputation of the Well, which was to them as a common country, and the honour of the company to which they both belonged, and of which Mr. Winterblossom was in a manner the proper representative, as being, with consent of all, the perpetual president. He reminded him how many quarrels had been nightly undertaken and departed from on the ensuing morning, without any suitable consequences—said, "that people began to talk of the place oddly; and that, for his own part, he found his own honour so nearly touched, that he had begun to think he himself would be obliged to bring somebody or other to account for the general credit of the Well; and now, just when the most beautiful occasion had arisen to put everything on a handsome footing, it was hard—it was cruel—it was most unjustifiable—in Mr. Winterblossom to decline so simple a matter as was requested of him."

Dry and taciturn as the Captain was on all ordinary occasions, he proved, on the present, eloquent and almost pathetic; for the tears came into his eyes when he recounted the various quarrels which had become addled, notwithstanding his best endeavours to hatch them into an honourable meeting; and here was one, at length, just chipping the shell, like to be smothered for want of the most ordinary concession on the part of Winterblossom. In short, that gentleman could not hold out any longer. "It was," he said, "a very foolish business, he thought; but to oblige Sir Bingo and Captain MacTurk, he had no objection to walk with them about noon as far as the Buck-stane, although he must observe the day was hazy, and he had felt a prophetic twinge or two, which looked like a visit of his old acquaintance podagra."

"Never mind that, my excellent friend," said the Captain, "a sup out of Sir Bingo's flask is like enough to put that to

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rights; and, by my soul, it is not the thing he is like to leave behind him on this sort of occasion, unless I be far mistaken in my man."

"But," said Winterblossom, "although I comply with your wishes thus far, Captain MacTurk, I by no means undertake for certain to back this same Master Tyrrel, of whom I know nothing at all, but only agree to go to the place in hopes of preventing mischief."

"Never fash your beard about that, Mr. Winterblossom," replied the Captain; "for a little mischief, as you call it, is become a thing absolutely necessary to the credit of the place; and, I am sure, whatever be the consequences, they cannot in the present instance be very fatal to anybody; for here is a young fellow that, if he should have a misfortune, nobody will miss, for nobody knows him; then there is Sir Bingo, whom everybody knows so well, that they will miss him all the less."

"And there will be Lady Bingo, a wealthy and handsome young widow," said Winterblossom, throwing his hat upon his head with the grace and pretension of former days, and sighing to see, as he looked in the mirror, how much time, that had whitened his hair, rounded his stomach, wrinkled his brow, and bent down his shoulders, had disqualified him, as he expressed it, "for entering for such a plate."

Secure of Winterblossom, the Captain's next anxiety was to obtain the presence of Dr. Quackleben, who, although he wrote himself M.D., did not by any means decline practice as a surgeon when any job offered for which he was likely to be well paid, as was warranted in the present instance, the wealthy Baronet being a party principally concerned. The Doctor, therefore, like the eagle scenting the carnage, seized, at the first word, the huge volume of morocco leather which formed his case of portable instruments, and uncoiled before the Captain, with ostentatious display, its formidable and glittering contents, upon which he began to lecture as upon a copious and interesting text, until the man of war thought it necessary to give him a word of caution.

"Och," says he, "I do pray you, Doctor, to carry that packet of yours under the breast of your coat, or in your pocket, or somewhere out of sight, and by no means to produce or open it before the parties. For although scalpels, and tourniquets, and pincers, and the like, are very ingenious implements, and pretty to behold, and are also useful when time and occasion

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call for them, yet I have known the sight of them take away a man's fighting stomach, and so lose their owner a job, Dr. Quackleben."

"By my faith, Captain MacTurk," said the Doctor, "you speak as if you were graduated!—I have known these treacherous articles play their master many a cursed trick. The very sight of my forceps, without the least effort on my part, once cured an inveterate toothache of three days' duration, prevented the extraction of a carious molendinar, which it was the very end of their formation to achieve, and sent me home minus a guinea. —But hand me that great-coat, Captain, and we will place the instruments in ambuscade until they are called into action in due time. I should think something will happen—Sir Bingo is a sure shot at a moor-cock."

"Cannot say," replied MacTurk; "I have known the pistol shake many a hand that held the fowling-piece fast enough. Yonder Tyrrel looks like a teevilish cool customer—I watched him the whole time I was delivering my errand, and I can promise you he is mettle to the back-bone."

"Well—I will have my bandages ready *secundum artem*," replied the man of medicine. "We must guard against hæmorrhage—Sir Bingo is a plethoric subject.—One o'clock, you say—at the Buck-stane—I will be punctual."

"Will you not walk with us?" said Captain MacTurk, who seemed willing to keep his whole convoy together on this occasion, lest, peradventure, any of them had fled from under his patronage.

"No," replied the Doctor, "I must first make an apology to worthy Mrs. Blower, for I had promised her my arm down to the river-side, where they are all to eat a kettle of fish."

"By Cot, and I hope we shall make them a prettier kettle of fish than was ever seen at St. Ronan's," said the Captain, rubbing his hands.

"Don't say *we*, Captain," replied the cautious Doctor; "I for one have nothing to do with the meeting—wash my hands of it. No, no, I cannot afford to be clapt up as accessory.—You ask me to meet you at the Buck-stane—no purpose assigned—I am willing to oblige my worthy friend, Captain MacTurk—walk that way, thinking of nothing particular—hear the report of pistols—hasten to the spot—fortunately just in time to prevent the most fatal consequences—chance most opportunely to have my case

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of instruments with me, indeed, generally walk with them about me—*nunquam non paratus*—then give my professional definition of the wound and state of the patient. That is the way to give evidence, Captain, before sheriffs, coroners, and such sort of folks—never commit one's self—it is a rule of our profession."

"Well, well, Doctor," answered the Captain, "you know your own ways best; and so you are but there to give a chance of help in case of accident, all the laws of honour will be fully complied with. But it would be a foul reflection upon me, as a man of honour, if I did not take care that there should be somebody to come in thirdsman between death and my principal."

At the awful hour of one, afternoon, there arrived upon the appointed spot Captain MacTurk, leading to the field the valorous Sir Bingo, not exactly straining like a greyhound in the slips, but rather looking moody like a butcher's bull-dog, which knows he must fight since his master bids him. Yet the Baronet showed no outward flinching or abatement of courage, excepting that the tune of Jenny Sutton, which he had whistled without intermission since he left the Hotel, had, during the last half-mile of their walk, sunk into silence; although, to look at the muscles of the mouth, projection of the lip, and vacancy of the eye, it seemed as if the notes were still passing through his mind, and that he whistled Jenny Sutton in his imagination. Mr. Winterblossom came two minutes after this happy pair, and the Doctor was equally punctual.

"Upon my soul," said the former, "this is a mighty silly affair, Sir Bingo, and might, I think, be easily taken up, at less risk to all parties than a meeting of this kind. You should recollect, Sir Bingo, that you have much depending on your life—you are a married man, Sir Bingo."

Sir Bingo turned the quid in his mouth, and squirted out the juice in a most coachman-like manner.

"Mr. Winterblossom," said the Captain, "Sir Bingo has in this matter put himself in my hands, and unless you think yourself more able to direct his course than I am, I must frankly tell you, that I will be disobliged by your interference. You may speak to your own friend as much as you please; and if you find yourself authorised to make any proposal, I shall be desirous to lend an ear to it on the part of my worthy principal, Sir Bingo. But I will be plain with you, that I do not greatly approve of

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settlements upon the field, though I hope I am a quiet and peaceable man; yet here is our honour to be looked after in the first place; and moreover, I must insist that every proposal for accommodation shall originate with your party or yourself."

"*My* party?" answered Winterblossom; "why really, though I came hither at your request, Captain MacTurk, yet I must see more of the matter, ere I can fairly pronounce myself second to a man I never saw but once."

"And, perhaps, may never see again," said the Doctor, looking at his watch; "for it is ten minutes past the hour, and here is no Mr. Tyrrel."

"Hey! what's that you say, Doctor?" said the Baronet, awakened from his apathy.

"He speaks tamned nonsense," said the Captain, pulling out a huge, old-fashioned, turnip-shaped implement, with a blackened silver dial-plate. "It is not above three minutes after one by the true time, and I will uphold Mr. Tyrrel to be a man of his word—never saw a man take a thing more coolly."

"Not more coolly than he takes his walk this way," said the Doctor; "for the hour is as I tell you—remember, I am professional—have pulses to count by the second and half-second—my timepiece must go as true as the sun."

"And I have mounted guard a thousand times by my watch," said the Captain; "and I defy the devil to say that Hector MacTurk did not always discharge his duty to the twentieth part of the fraction of a second—it was my great grandmother, Lady Killbracklin's, and I will maintain its reputation against any timepiece that ever went upon wheels."

"Well then, look at your own watch, Captain," said Winterblossom, "for time stands still with no man, and while we speak the hour advances. On my word, I think this Mr. Tyrrel intends to humbug us."

"Hey! what's that you say?" said Sir Bingo, once more starting from his sullen reverie.

"I shall not look at my watch upon no such matter," said the Captain; "nor will I any way be disposed to doubt your friend's honour, Mr. Winterblossom."

"*My* friend?" said Mr. Winterblossom; "I must tell you once more, Captain, that this Mr. Tyrrel is no friend of mine—none in the world. He is your friend, Captain MacTurk; and I own, if he keeps us waiting much longer on this occa-

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sion, I will be apt to consider his friendship as of very little value."

"And how dare you then say that the man is my friend?" said the Captain, knitting his brows in a most formidable manner.

"Pooh! pooh! Captain," answered Winterblossom, coolly, if not contemptuously—"keep all that for silly boys; I have lived in the world too long either to provoke quarrels, or to care about them. So, reserve your fire; it is all thrown away on such an old cock as I am. But I really wish we knew whether this fellow means to come—twenty minutes past the hour—I think it is odds that you are bilked, Sir Bingo?"

"Bilked! hey!" cried Sir Bingo; "by Gad, I always thought so—I wagered with Mowbray he was a raff—I am had, by Gad. I'll wait no longer than the half-hour, by Gad, were he a field-marshal."

"You will be directed in that matter by your friend, if you please, Sir Bingo," said the Captain.

"D—n me if I will," returned the Baronet—"Friend; a pretty friend, to bring me out here on such a fool's errand! I knew the fellow was a raff—but I never thought you, with all your chaff about honour, such a d—d spoon as to bring a message from a fellow who has fled the pit!"

"If you regret so much having come here to no purpose," said the Captain, in a very lofty tone, "and if you think I have used you like a spoon, as you say, I will have no objection in life to take Mr. Tyrrel's place, and serve your occasion, my boy!"

"By ——! and if you like it, you may fire away, and welcome," said Sir Bingo; "and I'll spin a crown for first shot, for I do not understand being brought here for nothing, d—n me!"

"And there was never man alive so ready as I am to give you something to stay your stomach," said the irritable Highlander.

"Oh fie, gentlemen! fie, fie, fie!" exclaimed the pacific Mr. Winterblossom—"For shame, Captain—Out upon you, Sir Bingo, are you mad?—what, principal and second!—the like was never heard of—never."

The parties were in some degree recalled to their more cool recollections by this expostulation, yet continued a short quarter-

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deck walk to and fro, upon parallel lines, looking at each other sullenly as they passed, and bristling like two dogs who have a mind to quarrel, yet hesitate to commence hostilities. During this promenade, also, the perpendicular and erect carriage of the veteran, rising on his toes at every step, formed a whimsical contrast with the heavy loutish shuffle of the bulky Baronet, who had, by dint of practice, very nearly attained that most enviable of all carriages, the gait of a shambling Yorkshire ostler. His coarse spirit was now thoroughly kindled, and like iron, or any other baser metal, which is slow in receiving heat, it retained long the smouldering and angry spirit of resentment that had originally brought him to the place, and now rendered him willing to wreak his uncomfortable feelings upon the nearest object which occurred, since the first purpose of his coming thither was frustrated. In his own phrase, his pluck was up, and finding himself in a fighting humour, he thought it a pity, like Bob Acres, that so much good courage should be thrown away. As, however, that courage after all consisted chiefly in ill humour; and as, in the demeanour of the Captain, he read nothing deferential or deprecatory of his wrath, he began to listen with more attention to the arguments of Mr. Winterblossom, who entreated them not to sully, by private quarrel, the honour they had that day so happily acquired without either blood or risk.

"It was now," he said, "three-quarters of an hour past the time appointed for this person, who calls himself Tyrrel, to meet Sir Bingo Binks. Now, instead of standing squabbling here, which serves no purpose, I propose we should reduce to writing the circumstances which attend this affair, for the satisfaction of the company at the Well, and that the memorandum shall be regularly attested by our subscriptions; after which, I shall farther humbly propose that it be subjected to the revision of the Committee of Management."

"I object to any revision of a statement to which my name shall be appended," said the Captain.

"Right—very true, Captain," said the complaisant Mr. Winterblossom; "undoubtedly you know best, and your signature is completely sufficient to authenticate this transaction—however, as it is the most important which has occurred since the Spring was established, I propose we shall all sign the *procès verbal*, as I may term it."

"Leave me out, if you please," said the Doctor, not much

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satisfied that both the original quarrel and the by-battle had passed over without any occasion for the offices of a Machaon; "leave me out, if you please; for it does not become me to be ostensibly concerned in any proceedings which have had for their object a breach of the peace. And for the importance of waiting here for an hour, in a fine afternoon, it is my opinion there was a more important service done to the Well of St. Ronan's, when I, Quentin Quackleben, M.D., cured Lady Penelope Penfeather of her seventh attack upon the nerves, attended with febrile symptoms."

"No disparagement to your skill at all, Doctor," said Mr. Winterblossom; "but I conceive the lesson which this fellow has received will be a great means to prevent improper persons from appearing at the Spring hereafter; and, for my part, I shall move that no one be invited to dine at the table in future, till his name is regularly entered as a member of the company, in the lists at the public room. And I hope both Sir Bingo and the Captain will receive the thanks of the company, for their spirited conduct in expelling the intruder.—Sir Bingo, will you allow me to apply to your flask—a little twinge I feel, owing to the dampness of the grass."

Sir Bingo, soothed by the consequence he had acquired, readily imparted to the invalid a thimbleful of his cordial, which, we believe, had been prepared by some cunning chemist in the wilds of Glenlivat. He then filled a bumper, and extended it towards the veteran, as an unequivocal symptom of reconciliation. The real turbinacious flavour no sooner reached the nose of the Captain, than the beverage was turned down his throat with symptoms of most unequivocal applause. "I shall have some hope of the young fellows of this day," he said, "now that they begin to give up their Dutch and French distilled waters, and stick to genuine Highland ware. By Cot, it is the only liquor fit for a gentleman to drink in a morning, if he can have the good fortune to come by it, you see."

"Or after dinner either, Captain," said the Doctor, to whom the glass had passed in rotation; "it is worth all the wines in France for flavour, and more cordial to the system besides."

"And now," said the Captain, "that we may not go off the ground with anything on our stomachs worse than the whisky, I can afford to say (as Captain Hector MacTurk's character is tolerably well established), that I am sorry for the little differ-

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ence that has occurred betwixt me and my worthy friend, Sir Bingo, here."

"And since you are so civil, Captain," said Sir Bingo, "why, I am sorry too—only it would put the devil out of temper to lose so fine a fishing day—wind south—fine air on the pool—water settled from the flood—just in trim—and I dare say three pairs of hooks have passed over my cast before this time."

He closed this elaborate lamentation with a libation of the same cordial which he had imparted to his companions; and they returned in a body to the Hotel, where the transactions of the morning were soon afterwards announced to the company, by the following programme:—

STATEMENT.

"Sir Bingo Binks, baronet, having found himself aggrieved by the uncivil behaviour of an individual calling himself Francis Tyrrel, now or lately a resident at the Cleikum Inn, Aultoun of St. Ronan's; and having empowered Captain Hector MacTurk to wait upon the said Mr. Tyrrel to demand an apology, under the alternative of personal satisfaction, according to the laws of honour and the practice of gentlemen, the said Tyrrel voluntarily engaged to meet the said Sir Bingo Binks, baronet, at the Buckstane, near St. Ronan's Burn, upon this present day, being Wednesday —— August. In consequence of which appointment, we, the undersigned, did attend at the place named, from one o'clock till two, without seeing or hearing anything whatever of the said Francis Tyrrel, or any one in his behalf—which fact we make thus publicly known, that all men, and particularly the distinguished company assembled at the Fox Hotel, may be duly apprised of the character and behaviour of the said Francis Tyrrel, in case of his again presuming to intrude himself into the society of persons of honour.

"The Fox Inn and Hotel, St. Ronan's Well—August 18—.

(Signed) "BINGO BINKS.
"HECTOR MACTURK.
"PHILIP WINTERBLOSSOM."

A little lower followed this separate attestation:

"I, Quentin Quackleben, M.D., F.R.S., D.E., B.L., X.Z., etc. etc., being called upon to attest what I know in the said matter, do hereby verify, that, being by accident at the

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Buck-stane, near St. Ronan's Burn, on this present day, at the hour of one afternoon, and chancing to remain there for the space of nearly an hour, conversing with Sir Bingo Binks, Captain MacTurk, and Mr. Winterblossom, we did not, during that time, see or hear anything of or from the person calling himself Francis Tyrrel, whose presence at that place seemed to be expected by the gentlemen I have just named." This affiche was dated like the former, and certified under the august hand of Quentin Quackleben, M.D., etc. etc. etc.

Again, and prefaced by the averment that an improper person had been lately introduced into the company of St. Ronan's Well, there came forth a legislative enactment, on the part of the Committee, declaring, "that no one shall in future be invited to the dinners, or balls, or other entertainments of the Well, until their names shall be regularly entered in the books kept for the purpose at the rooms." Lastly, there was a vote in thanks to Sir Bingo Binks and Captain MacTurk for their and the Captain and the pains which they had taken to exclude their spirited conduct in the company at St. Ronan's Well.
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"Or after dinner either, Captain," said the Doctor, to whom the glass had passed in rotation; "it is worth all the wines in France for flavour, and more cordial to the system besides."

"And now," said the Captain, "that we may not go off the ground with anything on our stomachs worse than the whisky, I can afford to say (as Captain Hector MacTurk's character is tolerably well established), that I am sorry for the little differ-

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CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

THE CONSULTATION.

Clown.—I hope here be proofs.
MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

THE borough of —— lies, as all the world knows, about fourteen miles distant from St. Ronan's, being the county town of that shire, which, as described in the Tourist's Guide, numbers among its objects of interest that gay and popular watering-place, whose fame, no doubt, will be greatly enhanced by the present annals of its earlier history. As it is at present unnecessary to be more particular concerning the scene of our story, we will fill up the blank left in the first name with the fictitious appellation of Marchthorn, having often found ourselves embarrassed in the course of a story, by the occurrence of an ugly hiatus, which we cannot always at first sight fill up, with the proper reference to the rest of the narrative.

Marchthorn, then, was an old-fashioned Scottish town, the street of which, on market-day, showed a reasonable number of stout great-coated yeomen, bartering or dealing for the various commodities of their farms; and on other days of the week, only a few forlorn burghers, crawling about like half-awakened flies, and watching the town steeple till the happy sound of twelve strokes from Time's oracle should tell them it was time to take their meridian dram. The narrow windows of the shops intimated very imperfectly the miscellaneous contents of the interior, where every merchant, as the shopkeepers of Marchthorn were termed, *more Scotico*, sold every thing that could be thought of. As for manufactures, there were none, except that of the careful Town-Council, who were mightily busied in preparing the warp and woof, which, at the end of every five or six years, the town of Marchthorn contributed, for the purpose of weaving the fourth or fifth part of a member of Parliament.

In such a town it usually happens that the Sheriff-clerk, especially supposing him agent for several lairds of the higher order, is possessed of one of the best-looking houses; and such was that of Mr. Bindloose. None of the smartness of the brick-built and brass-hammered mansion of a southern attorney

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appeared indeed in this mansion, which was a tall, thin, grim-looking building, in the centre of the town, with narrow windows and projecting gables, notched into that sort of descent, called crow-steps, and having the lower casements defended by stancheons of iron; for Mr. Bindloose, as frequently happens, kept a branch of one of the two national banks, which had been lately established in the town of Marchthorn.

Towards the door of this tenement, there advanced slowly up the ancient, but empty streets of this famous borough, a vehicle, which, had it appeared in Piccadilly, would have furnished unremitted laughter for a week, and conversation for a twelvemonth. It was a two-wheeled vehicle, which claimed none of the modern appellations of tilbury, tandem, dennet, or the like; but aspired only to the humble name of that almost forgotten accommodation, a whiskey; or, according to some authorities, a tim-whiskey. Green was, or had been, its original colour, and it was placed sturdily and safely low upon its little old-fashioned wheels, which bore much less than the usual proportion to the size of the carriage which they sustained. It had a calash head, which had been pulled up, in consideration either to the dampness of the morning air, or to the retiring delicacy of the fair form which, shrouded by leathern curtains, tenanted this venerable specimen of antediluvian coach-building.

But, as this fair and modest dame noway aspired to the skill of a charioteer, the management of a horse, which seemed as old as the carriage he drew, was in the exclusive charge of an old fellow in a postilion's jacket, whose grey hairs escaped on each side of an old-fashioned velvet jockey-cap, and whose left shoulder was so considerably elevated above his head, that it seemed as if, with little effort, his neck might have been tucked under his arm, like that of a roasted grouse-cock. This gallant equerry was mounted on a steed as old as that which toiled betwixt the shafts of the carriage, and which he guided by a leading rein. Goading one animal with his single spur, and stimulating the other with his whip, he effected a reasonable trot upon the causeway, which only terminated when the whiskey stopped at Mr. Bindloose's door—an event of importance enough to excite the curiosity of the inhabitants of that and the neighbouring houses. Wheels were laid aside, needles left sticking in the half-finished seams, and many a nose, spec-

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tacled and unspectacled, was popped out of the adjoining windows, which had the good fortune to command a view of Mr. Bindloose's front door. The faces of two or three giggling clerks were visible at the barred casements of which we have spoken, much amused at the descent of an old lady from this respectable carriage, whose dress and appearance might possibly have been fashionable at the time when her equipage was new. A satin cardinal, lined with grey squirrels' skin, and a black silk bonnet, trimmed with crape, were garments which did not now excite the respect which in their fresher days they had doubtless commanded. But there was that in the features of the wearer, which would have commanded Mr. Bindloose's best regard, though it had appeared in far worse attire; for he beheld the face of an ancient customer, who had always paid her law expenses with the ready penny, and whose accompt with the bank was balanced by a very respectable sum at her credit. It was, indeed, no other than our respected friend, Mrs. Dods of the Cleikum Inn, St. Ronan's, Aultoun.

Now her arrival intimated matter of deep import. Meg was a person of all others most averse to leave her home, where, in her own opinion at least, nothing went on well without her immediate superintendence. Limited, therefore, as was her sphere, she remained fixed in the centre thereof; and few as were her satellites, they were under the necessity of performing their revolutions around her, while she herself continued stationary. Saturn, in fact, would be scarce more surprised at a passing call from the Sun, than Mr. Bindloose at this unexpected visit of his old client. In one breath he rebuked the inquisitive impertinence of his clerks, in another stimulated his housekeeper, old Hannah—for Mr. Bindloose was a bluff bachelor—to get tea ready in the green parlour; and while yet speaking, was at the side of the whiskey, unclasping the curtains, rolling down the apron, and assisting his old friend to dismount.

"The japanned tea-caddie, Hannah—the best bohea—bid Tib kindle a spark of fire—the morning's damp—Draw in the giggling faces of ye, ye d—d idle scoundrels, or laugh at your ain toom pouches—it will be lang or your weeldoing fill them." This was spoken, as the honest lawyer himself might have said, *in transitu*, the rest by the side of the carriage. "My stars, Mrs. Dods, and is this really your ain sell, *in propria persona?*

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—Wha lookit for you at such a time of day?—Anthony, how's a' wi' ye, Anthony?—so ye hae taen the road again, Anthony—help us down wi' the apron, Anthony—that will do.—Lean on me, Mrs. Dods—help your mistress, Anthony—put the horses in my stable—the lads will give you the key.—Come away, Mrs. Dods—I am blithe to see you straight your legs on the causeway of our auld borough again—come in by, and we'll see to get you some breakfast, for ye hae been asteer early this morning."

"I am a sair trouble to you, Mr. Bindloose," said the old lady, accepting the offer of his arm, and accompanying him into the house; "I am e'en a sair trouble to you, but I could not rest till I had your advice on something of moment."

"Happy will I be to serve you, my guid auld acquaintance," said the Clerk; "but sit you down—sit you down—sit you down, Mrs. Dods—meat and mass never hindered wark. Ye are something overcome wi' your travel—the spirit canna aye bear through the flesh, Mrs. Dods; ye should remember that your life is a precious one, and ye should take care of your health, Mrs. Dods."

"My life precious!" exclaimed Meg Dods; "nane o' your portion being, Mr. Bindloose—Deil ane wad miss the auld girn-had a calash he Bindloose, unless it were here and there a puir either to the dampness uld house-tyke, that wadna be sae weel licacy of the fair form w
tenanted this venerable specim the Clerk, in a tone of friendly

But, as this fair and modest da o hear ye speak of yourself of a charioteer, the management of d, as for quitting us, I old as the carriage he drew, was in th etter this half-score of old fellow in a postilion's jacket, whose of setting your house each side of an old-fashioned velvet jock f a Christian woman shoulder was so considerably elevated abo f we had grace to seemed as if, with little effort, his neck migh
under his arm, like that of a roasted grouse-co day soon, Mr. equerry was mounted on a steed as old as th betwixt the shafts of the carriage, and which he ily welcome leading rein. Goading one animal with his single hand—stimulating the other with his whip, he effected a rea as trot upon the causeway, which only terminated when whiskey stopped at Mr. Bindloose's door—an event of impo to ance enough to excite the curiosity of the inhabitants of th and the neighbouring houses. Wheels were laid aside, needl left sticking in the half-finished seams, and many a nose, spec-

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of the Chinese herb—sipped again, then tried to eat a bit of bread and butter, with very indifferent success; and notwithstanding the lawyer's compliments to her good looks, seemed, in reality, on the point of becoming ill.

"In the deil's name, what is the matter?" said the lawyer, too well read in a profession where sharp observation is peculiarly necessary to suffer these symptoms of agitation to escape him. "Ay, dame, ye are taking this business of yours deeper to heart than ever I kend you take onything. Ony o' your banded debtors failed, or like to fail? What then, cheer ye up—you can afford a little loss, and it canna be ony great matter, or I would doubtless have heard of it."

"In troth, but it *is* a loss, Mr. Bindloose; and what say ye to the loss of a friend?"

This was a possibility which had never entered the lawyer's long list of calamities, and he was at some loss to conceive what the old lady could possibly mean by so sentimental a prolusion. But just as he began to come out with his "Ay, ay, we are all mortal, *Vita incerta, mors certissima!*" and two or three more pithy reflections, which he was in the habit of uttering after funerals, when the will of the deceased was about to be opened —just then Mrs. Dods was pleased to become the expounder of her own oracle.

"I see how it is, Mr. Bindloose," she said; "I maun tell my ain ailment, for you are no likely to guess it; and so, if ye will shut the door, and see that nane of your giggling callants are listening in the passage, I will e'en tell you how things stand with me."

Mr. Bindloose hastily arose to obey her commands, gave a cautionary glance into the Bank-office, and saw that his idle apprentices were fast at their desks—turned the key upon them, as if it were in a fit of absence, and then returned, not a little curious to know what could be the matter with his old friend; and leaving off all farther attempts to put cases, quietly drew his chair near hers, and awaited her own time to make her communication.

"Mr. Bindloose," said she, "I am no sure that you may mind, about six or seven years ago, that there were twa daft English callants, lodgers of mine, that had some trouble from auld St. Ronan's about shooting on the Spring-well-head muirs."

"I mind it as weel as yesterday, Mistress," said the Clerk;

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"by the same token you gave me a note for my trouble (which wasna worth speaking about), and bade me no bring in a bill against the puir bairns—ye had aye a kind heart, Mrs. Dods."

"Maybe, and maybe no, Mr. Bindloose—that is just as I find folk.—But concerning these lads, they baith left the country, and, as I think, in some ill blude wi' ane another, and now the auldest and the doucest of the twa came back again about a fortnight sin' syne, and has been my guest ever since."

"Aweel, and I trust he is not at his auld tricks again, good-wife?" answered the Clerk. "I havena sae muckle to say either wi' the new Sheriff or the Bench of Justices as I used to hae, Mrs. Dods—and the Procurator-Fiscal is very severe on poaching, being borne out by the new Association—few of our auld friends of the Killnakelty are able to come to the sessions now, Mrs. Dods."

"The waur for the country, Mr. Bindloose," replied the old lady—"they were decent, considerate men, that didna plague a puir herd callant muckle about a moorfowl or a mawkin, unless he turned common fowler—Sir Robert Ringhorse used to say the herd lads shot as mony gleds and pyots as they did game.—But new lords new laws—naething but fine and imprisonment, and the game no a feather the plentier. If I wad hae a brace or twa of birds in the house, as everybody looks for them after the twelfth—I ken what they are like to cost me—And what for no?—risk maun be paid for.—There is John Pirner himsell, that has keepit the muir-side thirty year, in spite of a' the lairds in the country, shoots, he tells me, now-a-days, as if he felt a rape about his neck."

"It wasna about ony game business, then, that you wanted advice?" said Bindloose, who, though somewhat of a digresser himself, made little allowance for the excursions of others from the subject in hand.

"Indeed is it no, Mr. Bindloose," said Meg; "but it is e'en about this unhappy callant that I spoke to you about.—Ye maun ken I have cleiket a particular fancy to this lad, Francis Tirl—a fancy that whiles surprises my very sell, Mr. Bindloose, only that there is nae sin in it."

"None—none in the world, Mrs. Dods," said the lawyer, thinking at the same time within his own mind—"Oho! the mist begins to clear up—the young poacher has hit the mark, I see—winged the old barren grey-hen!—ay, ay—marriage-

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contract, no doubt—but I maun gie her line.—Ye are a wise woman, Mrs. Dods," he continued aloud, "and can doubtless consider the chances and the changes of human affairs."

"But I could never have considered what has befallen this puir lad, Mr. Bindloose," said Mrs. Dods, "through the malice of wicked men.—He lived then, at the Cleikum, as I tell you, for mair than a fortnight, as quiet as a lamb on a lea-rig—a decenter lad never came within my door—ate and drank eneugh for the gude of the house, and nae mair than was for his ain gude, whether of body or soul—cleared his bills ilka Saturday at e'en, as regularly as Saturday came round."

"An admirable customer, no doubt, Mrs. Dods," said the lawyer.

"Never was the like of him for that matter," answered the honest dame. "But to see the malice of men!—Some of thae landloupers and gill-flirts doun at the filthy puddle yonder, that they ca' the Waal, had heard of this puir lad, and the bits of pictures that he made fashion of drawing, and they maun cuitle him awa doun to the hottle, where mony a bonny story they had clecked, Mr. Bindloose, baith of Mr. Tirl and of mysell."

"A Commissary Court business," said the writer, going off again upon a false scent. "I shall trim their jackets for them, Mrs. Dods, if you can but bring tight evidence of the facts—I will soon bring them to fine and palinode—I will make them repent meddling with your good name."

"My gude name! What the sorrow is the matter wi' my name, Mr. Bindloose?" said the irritable client. "I think ye hae been at the wee cappie this morning, for as early as it is—My gude name!—if onybody touched my gude name, I would neither fash council nor commissary—I wad be down amang them like a jer-falcon amang a wheen wild geese, and the best amang them that dared to say onything of Meg Dods but what was honest and civil, I wad sune see if her cockernonnie was made of her ain hair or other folk's. *My* gude name, indeed!"

"Weel, weel, Mrs. Dods, I was mista'en, that's a'," said the writer, "I was mista'en; and I dare to say you would haud your ain wi' your neighbours as weel as ony woman in the land—But let us hear now what the grief is—in one word."

"In one word, then, Clerk Bindloose, it is little short of—murder," said Meg in a low tone, as if the very utterance of the word startled her

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"Murder! murder, Mrs. Dods?—it cannot be—there is not a word of it in the Sheriff-office—the Procurator-Fiscal kens nothing of it—there could not be murder in the country, and me not hear of it—for God's sake, take heed what you say, woman, and dinna get yourself into trouble."

"Mr. Bindloose, I can but speak according to my lights," said Mrs. Dods; "you are in a sense a judge in Israel, at least you are one of the scribes having authority—and I tell you with a wae and bitter heart, that this puir callant of mine that was lodging in my house has been murdered or kidnapped awa amang thae banditti folk down at the New Waal; and I'll hae the law put in force against them, if it should cost me a hundred pounds."

The Clerk stood much astonished at the nature of Meg's accusation, and the pertinacity with which she seemed disposed to insist upon it.

"I have this comfort," she continued, "that whatever has happened, it has been by no fault of mine, Mr. Bindloose; for weel I wot, before that bloodthirsty auld half-pay Philistine, MacTurk, got to speech of him, I clawed his cantle to some purpose with my hearth-besom.—But the poor simple bairn himsell, that had nae mair knowledge of the wickedness of human nature than a calf has of a flesher's gully, he threepit to see the auld hardened bloodshedder, and trysted wi' him to meet wi' some of the gang at an hour certain the neist day, and awa he gaed to keep tryst, but since that hour naebody ever has set een on him.—And the mansworn villains now want to put a disgrace on him, and say that he fled the country rather than face them!—a likely story—fled the country for them!—and leave his bill unsettled—him that was sae regular—and his portmantle and his fishing-rod, and the pencils and pictures he held sic a wark about!—It's my faithful belief, Mr. Bindloose—and ye may trust me or no as ye like—that he had some foul play between the Cleikum and the Buck-stane. I have thought it, and I have dreamed it, and I will be at the bottom of it, or my name is not Meg Dods, and that I wad have them a' to reckon on.—Ay, ay, that's right, Mr. Bindloose, tak out your pen and inkhorn, and let us set about it to purpose."

With considerable difficulty, and at the expense of much cross-examination, Mr. Bindloose extracted from his client a detailed account of the proceedings of the company at the Well towards

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Tyrrel, so far as they were known to or suspected by Meg, making notes, as the examination proceeded, of what appeared to be matter of consequence. After a moment's consideration, he asked the dame the very natural question, how she came to be acquainted with the material fact, that a hostile appointment was made between Captain MacTurk and her lodger, when, according to her own account, it was made *intra parietes*, and *remotis testibus?*

"Ay, but we victuallers ken weel eneugh what goes on in our ain houses," said Meg—"And what for no?—If ye *maun* ken a' about it, I e'en listened through the key-hole of the door."

"And do you say you heard them settle an appointment for a duel?" said the Clerk; "and did you no take ony measures to hinder mischief, Mrs. Dods, having such a respect for this lad as you say you have, Mrs. Dods?—I really wadna have looked for the like o' this at your hands."

"In truth, Mr. Bindloose," said Meg, putting her apron to her eyes, "and that's what vexes me mair than a' the rest, and ye needna say muckle to ane whose heart is e'en the sairer that she has been a thought to blame. But there has been mony a challenge, as they ca' it, passed in my house when thae daft lads of the Wildfire Club and the Helterskelter were upon their rambles; and they had aye sense eneugh to make it up without fighting, sae that I really did not apprehend onything like mischief.—And ye maun think, moreover, Mr. Bindloose, that it would have been an unco thing if a guest, in a decent and creditable public like mine, was to have cried coward before ony of thae land-louping blackguards that live down at the hottle yonder."

"That is to say, Mrs. Dods, you were desirous your guest should fight for the honour of your house," said Bindloose.

"What for no, Mr. Bindloose?—Isna that kind of fray aye about honour? and what for should the honour of a substantial, four-nooked sclated house of three storeys no be foughten for, as weel as the credit of ony of these feckless callants that make such a fray about their reputation?—I promise you my house, the Cleikum, stood in the Auld Town of St. Ronan's before they were born, and it will stand there after they are hanged, as I trust some of them are like to be."

"Well, but perhaps your lodger had less zeal for the honour of the house, and has quietly taken himself out of harm's way,"

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said Mr. Bindloose; "for, if I understand your story, this meeting never took place."

"Have less zeal!" said Meg, determined to be pleased with no supposition of her lawyer, "Mr. Bindloose, ye little ken him—I wish ye had seen him when he was angry!—I dared hardly face him mysell, and there are no mony folk that I am feared for—Meeting! there was nae meeting, I trow—they never dared to meet him fairly—but I am sure waur came of it than ever would have come of a meeting; for Anthony heard twa shots gang off as he was watering the auld naig down at the burn, and that is not far frae the footpath that leads to the Buck-stane. I was angry at him for no making on to see what the matter was, but he thought it was auld Pirner out wi' the double barrel, and he wasna keen of making himself a witness, in case he suld have been caa'd on in the Poaching Court."

"Well," said the Sheriff-clerk, "and I dare say he did hear a poacher fire a couple of shots—nothing more likely. Believe me, Mrs. Dods, your guest had no fancy for the party Captain MacTurk invited him to—and being a quiet sort of man, he has just walked away to his own home, if he has one—I am really sorry you have given yourself the trouble of this long journey about so simple a matter."

Mrs. Dods remained with her eyes fixed on the ground in a very sullen and discontented posture, and when she spoke, it was in a tone of corresponding displeasure.

"Aweel—aweel—live and learn, they say—I thought I had a friend in you, Mr. Bindloose—I am sure I aye took your part when folk miscaa'd ye, and said ye were this, that, and the other thing, and little better than an auld sneck-drawing loon, Mr. Bindloose.—And ye have aye keepit my penny of money, though, nae doubt, Tam Turnpenny lives nearer me, and they say he allows half a per cent mair than ye do if the siller lies, and mine is but seldom steered."

"But ye have not the Bank's security, madam," said Mr. Bindloose, reddening. "I say harm of nae man's credit—ill would it beseem me—but there is a difference between Tam Turnpenny and the Bank I trow."

"Weel, weel, Bank here Bank there, I thought I had a friend in you, Mr. Bindloose; and here am I, come from my ain house all the way to yours, for sma' comfort, I think."

"My stars, madam," said the perplexed scribe, "what would

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you have me to do in such a blind story as yours, Mrs. Dods?—Be a thought reasonable—consider that there is no *Corpus delicti*."

"*Corpus delicti?* and what's that?" said Meg; "something to be paid for, nae doubt, for your hard words a' end in that.—And what for suld I no have a Corpus delicti, or a Habeas Corpus, or ony other Corpus that I like, sae lang as I am willing to lick and lay down the ready siller?"

"Lord help and pardon us, Mrs. Dods," said the distressed agent, "ye mistake the matter a' thegither! When I say there is no Corpus delicti, I mean to say there is no proof that a crime has been committed."*

"And does the man say that murder is not a crime, then?" answered Meg, who had taken her own view of the subject far too strongly to be converted to any other—"Weel I wot it's a crime, baith by the law of God and man, and mony a pretty man has been strapped for it."

"I ken all that very weel," answered the writer; "but, my stars, Mrs. Dods, there is nae evidence of murder in this case—nae proof that a man has been slain—nae production of his dead body—and that is what we call the Corpus delicti."

"Weel, than, the deil lick it out of ye," said Meg, rising in wrath, "for I will awa hame again; and as for the puir lad's body, I'll hae it fund, if it cost me turning the earth for three miles round wi' pick and shool—if it were but to give the puir bairn Christian burial, and to bring punishment on MacTurk and the murdering crew at the Waal, and to shame an auld doited fule like yoursell, John Bindloose."

She rose in wrath to call her vehicle; but it was neither the interest nor the intention of the writer that his customer and he should part on such indifferent terms. He implored her patience, and reminded her that the horses, poor things, had just come off their stage—an argument which sounded irresistible in the ears of the old she-publican, in whose early education due care of the post-cattle mingled with the most sacred duties. She therefore resumed her seat again in a sullen mood, and Mr. Bindloose was cudgelling his brains for some argument which might bring the old lady to reason, when his attention was drawn by a noise in the passage.

* For example, a man cannot be tried for murder merely in the case of the non-appearance of an individual; there must be proof that the party has been murdered.

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CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

A PRAISER OF PAST TIMES.

—— Now your traveller,
He and his toothpick at my worship's mess.
KING JOHN.

THE noise stated at the conclusion of last chapter to have disturbed Mr. Bindloose, was the rapping of one, as in haste and impatience, at the Bank-office door, which office was an apartment of the Banker's house, on the left hand of his passage, as the parlour in which he had received Mrs. Dods was upon the right.

In general, this office was patent to all having business there; but at present, whatever might be the hurry of the party who knocked, the clerks within the office could not admit him, being themselves made prisoners by the prudent jealousy of Mr. Bindloose, to prevent them from listening to his consultation with Mrs. Dods. They therefore answered the angry and impatient knocking of the stranger only with stifled giggling from within, finding it no doubt an excellent joke, that their master's precaution was thus interfering with their own discharge of duty.

With one or two hearty curses upon them, as the regular plagues of his life, Mr. Bindloose darted into the passage, and admitted the stranger into his official apartment. The doors both of the parlour and office remaining open, the ears of Luckie Dods (experienced, as the reader knows, in collecting intelligence) could partly overhear what passed. The conversation seemed to regard a cash transaction of some importance, as Meg became aware when the stranger raised a voice which was naturally sharp and high, as he did when uttering the following words, towards the close of a conversation which had lasted about five minutes—"Premium?—Not a pice, sir—not a courie—not a farthing—premium for a Bank of England bill? d'ye take me for a fool, sir?—do not I know that you call forty days par when you give remittances to London?"

Mr. Bindloose was here heard to mutter something indistinctly about the custom of the trade.

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"Custom!" retorted the stranger, "no such thing—damn'd bad custom, if it is one—don't tell me of customs—'Sbodikins, man, I know the rate of exchange all over the world, and have drawn bills from Timbuctoo—My friends in the Strand filed it along with Bruce's from Gondar—talk to me of premium on a Bank of England post-bill!—What d'ye look at the bill for?—D'ye think it doubtful?—I can change it."

"By no means necessary," answered Bindloose, "the bill is quite right; but it is usual to indorse, sir."

"Certainly—reach me a pen—d'ye think I can write with my ratan?—What sort of ink is this?—yellow as curry sauce—never mind—there is my name—Peregrine Touchwood—I got it from the Willoughbies, my Christian name—Have I my full change here?"

"Your full change, sir," answered Bindloose.

"Why, you should give *me* a premium, friend, instead of me giving you one."

"It is out of our way, I assure you, sir," said the banker, "quite out of our way—but if you would step into the parlour and take a cup of tea"——

"Why, ay," said the stranger, his voice sounding more distinctly as (talking all the while, and ushered along by Mr. Bindloose) he left the office and moved towards the parlour, "a cup of tea were no such bad thing, if one could come by it genuine—but as for your premium"—— So saying, he entered the parlour and made his bow to Mrs. Dods, who, seeing what she called a decent purpose-like body, and aware that his pocket was replenished with English and Scottish paper currency, returned the compliment with her best courtesy.

Mr. Touchwood, when surveyed more at leisure, was a short, stout, active man, who, though sixty years of age and upwards, retained in his sinews and frame the elasticity of an earlier period. His countenance expressed self-confidence, and something like a contempt for those who had neither seen nor endured so much as he had himself. His short black hair was mingled with grey, but not entirely whitened by it. His eyes were jet black, deep-set, small, and sparkling, and contributed, with a short turned-up nose, to express an irritable and choleric habit. His complexion was burnt to a brick-colour by the vicissitudes of climate, to which it had been subjected; and his face, which, at the distance of a yard or two, seemed halo

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and smooth, appeared, when closely examined, to be seamed with a million of wrinkles, crossing each other in every direction possible, but as fine as if drawn by the point of a very small needle.* His dress was a blue coat and buff waistcoat, half-boots remarkably well blacked, and a silk handkerchief tied with military precision. The only antiquated part of his dress was a cocked hat of equilateral dimensions, in the button-hole of which he wore a very small cockade. Mrs. Dods, accustomed to judge of persons by their first appearance, said, that in the three steps which he made from the door to the tea-table, she recognised, without the possibility of mistake, the gait of a person who was well to pass in the world; "and that," she added with a wink, "is what we victuallers are seldom deceived in. If a gold-laced waistcoat. has an empty pouch, the plain swan's-down will be the brawer of the twa."

"A drizzling morning, good madam," said Mr. Touchwood, as with a view of sounding what sort of company he had got into.

"A fine saft morning for the crap, sir," answered Mrs. Dods, with equal solemnity.

"Right, my good madam; *soft* is the very word, though it has been some time since I heard it. I have cast a double hank about the round world since I last heard of a soft † morning."

"You will be from these parts, then?" said the writer, ingeniously putting a case, which, he hoped, would induce the stranger to explain himself. "And yet, sir," he added, after a pause, "I was thinking that Touchwood is not a Scottish name, at least that I ken of."

"Scottish name?—no," replied the traveller; "but a man may have been in these parts before, without being a native—or, being a native, he may have had some reason to change his name—there are many reasons why men change their names."

"Certainly, and some of them very good ones," said the lawyer; "as in the common case of an heir of entail, where deed of provision and tailzie is maist ordinarily implemented by taking up name and arms."

"Ay, or in the case of a man having made the country

* This was a peculiarity in the countenance of the celebrated Cossack leader Platoff.

† An epithet which expresses, in Scotland, what the barometer calls rainy.

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too hot for him under his own proper appellative," said Mr. Touchwood.

"That is a supposition, sir," replied the lawyer, "which it would ill become me to put.—But at any rate, if you knew this country formerly, ye cannot but be marvellously pleased with the change we have been making since the American war,—hill-sides bearing clover instead of heather,—rents doubled, trebled, quadrupled,—the auld reekie dungeons pulled down, and gentlemen living in as good houses as you will see anywhere in England."

"Much good may it do them, for a pack of fools!" replied Mr. Touchwood, hastily.

"You do not seem much delighted with our improvements, sir," said the banker, astonished to hear a dissentient voice where he conceived all men unanimous.

"Pleased!" answered the stranger—"Yes, as much pleased as I am with the devil, who, I believe, set many of them agoing. Ye have got an idea that everything must be changed—Unstable as water, ye shall not excel—I tell ye, there have been more changes in this poor nook of yours within the last forty years, than in the great empires of the East for the space of four thousand, for what I know."

"And why not," replied Bindloose, "if they be changes for the better?"

"But they are *not* for the better," replied Mr. Touchwood, eagerly. "I left your peasantry as poor as rats indeed, but honest and industrious, enduring their lot in this world with firmness, and looking forward to the next with hope—Now they are mere eye-servants—looking at their watches, forsooth, every ten minutes, lest they should work for their master half-an-instant after loosing-time—And then, instead of studying the Bible on the work days, to kittle the clergyman with doubtful points of controversy on the Sabbath, they glean all their theology from Tom Paine and Voltaire."

"Weel I wot the gentleman speaks truth," said Mrs. Dods. "I fand a bundle of their bawbee blasphemies in my ain kitchen—But I trow I made a clean house of the packman loon that brought them!—No content wi' turning the tawpies' heads wi' ballants, and driving them daft wi' ribands, to cheat them out of their precious souls, and gie them the deevil's ware, that I

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suld say sae, in exchange for the siller that suld support their puir father that's aff wark and bedridden!"

"Father! madam," said the stranger; "they think no more of their father than Regan or Goneril."

"In gude troth, ye have skeel of our sect, sir," replied the dame; "they are gomerils, every one of them—I tell them sae every hour of the day, but catch them profiting by the doctrine."

"And then the brutes are turned mercenary, madam," said Mr. Touchwood. "I remember when a Scotchman would have scorned to touch a shilling that he had not earned, and yet was as ready to help a stranger as an Arab of the desert. And now I did but drop my cane the other day as I was riding—a fellow who was working at the hedge made three steps to lift it—I thanked him, and my friend threw his hat on his head, and 'damned my thanks, if that were all'—Saint Giles could not have excelled him."

"Weel, weel," said the banker, "that may be a' as you say, sir, and nae doubt wealth makes wit waver, but the country's wealthy, that cannot be denied, and wealth, sir, ye ken"——

"I know wealth makes itself wings," answered the cynical stranger; "but I am not quite sure we have it even now. You make a great show, indeed, with building and cultivation; but stock is not capital, any more than the fat of a corpulent man is health or strength."

"Surely, Mr. Touchwood," said Bindloose, who felt his own account in the modern improvements, "a set of landlords, living like lairds in good earnest, and tenants with better housekeeping than the lairds used to have, and facing Whitsunday and Martinmas as I would face my breakfast—if these are not signs of wealth, I do not know where to seek for them."

"They are signs of folly, sir," replied Touchwood; "folly that is poor, and renders itself poorer by desiring to be thought rich; and how they come by the means they are so ostentatious of, you, who are a banker, perhaps can tell me better than I can guess."

"There is maybe an accommodation-bill discounted now and then, Mr. Touchwood; but men must have accommodation, or the world would stand still—accommodation is the grease that makes the wheels go."

"Ay, makes them go down hill to the devil," answered Touchwood. "I left you bothered about one Air bank, but

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the whole country is an Air bank now, I think—And who is to pay the piper?—But it is all one—I will see little more of it—it is a perfect Babel, and would turn the head of a man who has spent his life with people who love sitting better than running, silence better than speaking, who never eat but when they are hungry, never drink but when thirsty, never laugh without a jest, and never speak but when they have something to say. But here, it is all run, ride, and drive—froth, foam, and flippancy—no steadiness—no character."

"I'll lay the burden of my life," said Dame Dods, looking towards her friend Bindloose, "that the gentleman has been at the new Spaw-Waal yonder."

"Spaw do you call it, madam?—If you mean the new establishment that has been spawned down yonder at St. Ronan's, it is the very fountain-head of folly and coxcombry—a Babel for noise and a Vanity-fair for nonsense—no well in your swamps tenanted by such a conceited colony of clamorous frogs."

"Sir, sir!" exclaimed Dame Dods, delighted with the unqualified sentence passed upon her fashionable rivals, and eager to testify her respect for the judicious stranger who had pronounced it,—"will you let me have the pleasure of pouring you out a dish of tea?" And so saying, she took bustling possession of the administration which had hitherto remained in the hands of Mr. Bindloose himself. "I hope it is to your taste, sir," she continued, when the traveller had accepted her courtesy with the grateful acknowledgment which men addicted to speak a great deal usually show to a willing auditor.

"It is as good as we have any right to expect, ma'am," answered Mr. Touchwood; "not quite like what I have drunk at Canton with old Fong Qua; but the Celestial Empire does not send its best tea to Leadenhall Street, nor does Leadenhall Street send its best to Marchthorn."

"That may be very true, sir," replied the dame; "but I will venture to say that Mr. Bindloose's tea is muckle better than you had at the Spaw-Waal yonder."

"Tea, madam!—I saw none—Ash leaves and black-thorn leaves were brought in in painted canisters, and handed about by powder-monkeys in livery, and consumed by those who liked it, amidst the chattering of parrots and the squalling of kittens. I longed for the days of the Spectator, when I might have laid my penny on the bar, and retired without ceremony—But no—

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this blessed decoction was circulated under the auspices of some half-crazed blue-stocking or other, and we were saddled with all the formality of an entertainment, for this miserable allowance of a cockle-shell full of cat-lap per head."

"Weel, sir," answered Dame Dods, "all I can say is, that if it had been my luck to have served you at the Cleikum Inn, which our folks have kept for these twa generations, I canna pretend to say ye should have had such tea as ye have been used to in foreign parts where it grows, but the best I had I wad have gi'en it to a gentleman of your appearance, and I never charged mair than sixpence in all my time, and my father's before me."

"I wish I had known the Old Inn was still standing, madam," said the traveller; "I should certainly have been your guest, and sent down for the water every morning—the doctors insist I must use Cheltenham, or some substitute, for the bile—though, d—n them, I believe it's only to hide their own ignorance. And I thought this Spaw would have been the least evil of the two; but I have been fairly overreached—one might as well live in the inside of a bell. I think young St. Ronan's must be mad, to have established such a Vanity-fair upon his father's old property."

"Do you ken this St. Ronan's that now is?" inquired the Dame.

"By report only," said Mr. Touchwood; "but I have heard of the family, and I think I have read of them, too, in Scottish history. I am sorry to understand they are lower in the world than they have been. This young man does not seem to take the best way to mend matters, spending his time among gamblers and black-legs."

"I should be sorry if it were so," said honest Meg Dods, whose hereditary respect for the family always kept her from joining in any scandal affecting the character of the young laird —"My forbears, sir, have had kindness frae his; and although maybe he may have forgotten all about it, it wad ill become me to say onything of him that should not be said of his father's son."

Mr. Bindloose had not the same motive for forbearance; he declaimed against Mowbray as a thoughtless dissipater of his own fortune, and that of others. "I have some reason to speak," he said, "having two of his notes for £100 each, which I dis-

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counted out of mere kindness and respect for his ancient family, and which he thinks nae mair of retiring, than he does of paying the national debt—And here has he been raking every shop in Marchthorn, to fit out an entertainment for all the fine folk at the Well yonder; and tradesfolk are obliged to take his acceptances for their furnishings. But they may cash his bills that will; I ken ane that will never advance a bawbee on ony paper that has John Mowbray either on the back or front of it. He had mair need to be paying the debts which he has made already, than making new anes, that he may feed fules and flatterers."

"I believe he is likely to lose his preparations, too," said Mr. Touchwood, "for the entertainment has been put off, as I heard, in consequence of Miss Mowbray's illness."

"Ay, ay, puir thing!" said Dame Margaret Dods; "her health has been unsettled for this mony a day."

"Something wrong here, they tell me," said the traveller, pointing to his own forehead significantly.

"God only kens," replied Mrs. Dods; "but I rather suspect the heart than the head—the puir thing is hurried here and there, and down to the Waal, and up again, and nae society or quiet at hame; and a' thing ganging this unthrifty gate—nae wonder she is no that weel settled."

"Well," replied Touchwood, "she is worse they say than she has been, and that has occasioned the party at Shaws Castle having been put off. Besides, now this fine young lord has come down to the Well, undoubtedly they will wait her recovery."

"A lord!" ejaculated the astonished Mrs. Dods; "a lord come down to the Waal—they will be neither to haud nor to bind now—ance wud and aye waur—a lord!—set them up and shute them forward—a lord!—the Lord have a care o' us!—a lord at the hottle—Maister Touchwood, it's my mind he will only prove to be a Lord o' Session."

"Nay, not so, my good lady," replied the traveller, "he is an English lord, and, as they say, a Lord of Parliament—but some folk pretend to say there is a flaw in the title."

"I'll warrant is there—a dozen of them!" said Meg, with alacrity—for she could by no means endure to think on the accumulation of dignity likely to accrue to the rival establishment, from its becoming the residence of an actual nobleman. "I'll warrant he'll prove a landlouping lord on their hand, and

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they will be e'en cheap o' the loss—And he has come down out of order it's like, and nae doubt he'll no be lang there before he will recover his health, for the credit of the Spaw."

"Faith, madam, his present disorder is one which the Spaw will hardly cure—he is shot in the shoulder with a pistol-bullet—a robbery attempted, it seems—that is one of your new accomplishments—no such thing happened in Scotland in my time—men would have sooner expected to meet with the phœnix than with a highwayman."

"And where did this happen, if you please, sir?" asked the man of bills.

"Somewhere near the old village," replied the stranger; "and, if I am rightly informed, on Wednesday last."

"This explains your twa shots, I am thinking, Mrs. Dods," said Mr. Bindloose; "your groom heard them on the Wednesday—it must have been this attack on the stranger nobleman."

"Maybe it was, and maybe it was not," said Mrs. Dods; "but I'll see gude reason before I give up my ain judgment in that case. I wad like to ken if this gentleman," she added, returning to the subject from which Mr. Touchwood's interesting conversation had for a few minutes diverted her thoughts, "has heard aught of Mr. Tirl?"

"If you mean the person to whom this paper relates," said the stranger, taking a printed handbill from his pocket, "I heard of little else—the whole place rang of him, till I was almost as sick of Tyrrel as William Rufus was. Some idiotical quarrel which he had engaged in, and which he had not fought out, as their wisdom thought he should have done, was the principal cause of censure. That is another folly now, which has gained ground among you. Formerly, two old proud lairds, or cadets of good family, perhaps quarrelled, and had a rencontre, or fought a duel after the fashion of their old Gothic ancestors; but men who had no grandfathers never dreamt of such folly—And here the folk denounce a trumpery dauber of canvas, for such I understand to be this hero's occupation, as if he were a field-officer, who made valour his profession; and who, if you deprived him of his honour, was like to be deprived of his bread at the same time.—Ha, ha, ha! it reminds one of Don Quixote, who took his neighbour, Samson Carrasco, for a knight-errant."

The perusal of this paper, which contained the notes formerly laid before the reader, containing the statement of Sir Bingo,

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and the censure which the company at the Well had thought fit to pass upon his affair with Mr. Tyrrel, induced Mr. Bindloose to say to Mrs. Dods, with as little exultation on the superiority of his own judgment as human nature would permit,—

"Ye see now that I was right, Mrs. Dods, and that there was nae earthly use in your fashing yoursell wi' this lang journey —The lad has just ta'en the bent, rather than face Sir Bingo; and troth, I think him the wiser of the twa for sae doing— There ye hae print for it."

Meg answered somewhat sullenly, "Ye may be mista'en, for a' that, your ainsell, for as wise as ye are, Mr. Bindloose; I shall hae that matter mair strictly inquired into."

This led to a renewal of the altercation concerning the probable fate of Tyrrel, in the course of which the stranger was induced to take some interest in the subject.

At length Mrs. Dods, receiving no countenance from the experienced lawyer for the hypothesis she had formed, rose, in something like displeasure, to order her whiskey to be prepared. But hostess as she was herself, when in her own dominions, she reckoned without her host in the present instance; for the hump-backed postilion, as absolute in his department as Mrs. Dods herself, declared that the cattle would not be fit for the road these two hours yet. The good lady was therefore obliged to await his pleasure, bitterly lamenting all the while the loss which a house of public entertainment was sure to sustain by the absence of the landlord or landlady, and anticipating a long list of broken dishes, miscalculated reckonings, unarranged chambers, and other disasters, which she was to expect at her return. Mr. Bindloose, zealous to recover the regard of his good friend and client, which he had in some degree forfeited by contradicting her on a favourite subject, did not choose to offer the unpleasing, though obvious topic of consolation, that an unfrequented inn is little exposed to the accidents she apprehended. On the contrary, he condoled with her very cordially, and went so far as to hint, that if Mr. Touchwood had come to Marchthorn with post-horses, as he supposed from his dress, she could have the advantage of them to return with more despatch to St. Ronan's.

"I am not sure," said Mr. Touchwood, suddenly, "but I may return there myself. In that case I will be glad to set this good lady down, and to stay a few days at her house, if she will

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receive me.—I respect a woman like you, ma'am, who pursues the occupation of your father—I have been in countries, ma'am, where people have followed the same trade, from father to son, for thousands of years—And I like the fashion—it shows a steadiness and sobriety of character."

Mrs. Dods put on a joyous countenance at this proposal, protesting that all should be done in her power to make things agreeable; and while her good friend, Mr. Bindloose, expatiated upon the comfort her new guest would experience at the Cleikum, she silently contemplated with delight the prospect of a speedy and dazzling triumph, by carrying off a creditable customer from her showy and successful rival at the Well.

"I shall be easily accommodated, ma'am," said the stranger; "I have travelled too much and too far to be troublesome. A Spanish venta, a Persian khan, or a Turkish caravanserai, is all the same to me—only, as I have no servant—indeed, never can be plagued with one of these idle loiterers—I must beg you will send to the Well for a bottle of the water on such mornings as I cannot walk there myself—I find it is really of some service to me."

Mrs. Dods readily promised compliance with this reasonable request; graciously conceding, that there "could be nae ill in the water itsell, but maybe some gude—it was only the New Inn, and the daft havrels that they caa'd the Company, that she misliked. Folk had a jest that St. Ronan dookit the Deevil in the Waal, which garr'd it taste aye since of brimstone—but she dared to say that was a' Papist nonsense, for she was tell't by him that kend weel, and that was the minister himsell, that St. Ronan was nane of your idolatrous Roman saunts, but a Chaldee" (meaning probably a Culdee), "whilk was doubtless a very different story."

Matters being thus arranged to the satisfaction of both parties, the post-chaise was ordered, and speedily appeared at the door of Mr. Bindloose's mansion. It was not without a private feeling of reluctance, that honest Meg mounted the step of a vehicle, on the door of which was painted, "Fox Inn and Hotel, St. Ronan's Well;" but it was too late to start such scruples.

"I never thought to have entered ane o' their hurley-hackets," she said, as she seated herself; "and sic a like thing as it is—scarce room for twa folk!—Weel I wot, Mr. Touchwood, when I was in the hiring line, our twa chaises wad hae carried, ilk

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ane o' them, four grown folk and as mony bairns. I trust that doited creature Anthony will come awa back wi' my whiskey and the cattle, as soon as they have had their feed.—Are ye sure ye hae room aneugh, sir?—I wad fain hotch mysell farther yont."

"Oh, ma'am," answered the Oriental, "I am accustomed to all sorts of conveyances—a dooly, a litter, a cart, a palanquin, or a post-chaise, are all alike to me—I think I could be an inside with Queen Mab in a nutshell, rather than not get forward. —Begging you many pardons, if you have no particular objections, I will light my sheroot," etc. etc. etc.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

THE CLERGYMAN.

A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a-year.
GOLDSMITH'S DESERTED VILLAGE.

MRS. DODS's conviction, that her friend Tyrrel had been murdered by the sanguinary Captain MacTurk, remained firm and unshaken; but some researches for the supposed body having been found fruitless, as well as expensive, she began to give up the matter in despair. "She had done her duty"—"she left the matter to them that had a charge anent such things"—and "Providence would bring the mystery to light in his own fitting time"—such were the moralities with which the good dame consoled herself; and, with less obstinacy than Mr. Bindloose had expected, she retained her opinion without changing her banker and man of business.

Perhaps Meg's acquiescent inactivity in a matter which she had threatened to probe so deeply, was partly owing to the place of poor Tyrrel being supplied in her blue chamber, and in her daily thoughts and cares, by her new guest, Mr. Touchwood; in possessing whom, a deserter as he was from the Well, she obtained, according to her view of the matter, a decided triumph over her rivals. It sometimes required, however, the full force of this reflection, to induce Meg, old and crabbed as she was, to submit to the various caprices and exactions of attention which

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were displayed by her new lodger. Never any man talked so much as Touchwood of his habitual indifference to food and accommodation in travelling; and probably there never was any traveller who gave more trouble in a house of entertainment. He had his own whims about cookery; and when these were contradicted, especially if he felt at the same time a twinge of incipient gout, one would have thought he had taken his lessons in the pastry shop of Bedreddin Hassan, and was ready to renew the scene of the unhappy cream-tart, which was compounded without pepper. Every now and then he started some new doctrine in culinary matters, which Mrs. Dods deemed a heresy; and then the very house rang with their disputes. Again, his bed must necessarily be made at a certain angle from the pillow to the foot-posts; and the slightest deviation from this disturbed, he said, his nocturnal rest, and did certainly ruffle his temper. He was equally whimsical about the brushing of his clothes, the arrangement of the furniture in his apartment, and a thousand minutiæ, which, in conversation, he seemed totally to contemn.

It may seem singular, but such is the inconsistency of human nature, that a guest of this fanciful and capricious disposition gave much more satisfaction to Mrs. Dods than her quiet and indifferent friend Mr. Tyrrel. If her present lodger could blame, he could also applaud; and no artist, conscious of such skill as Mrs. Dods possessed, is indifferent to the praises of such a connoisseur as Mr. Touchwood. The pride of art comforted her for the additional labour; nor was it a matter unworthy of this most honest publican's consideration, that the guests who give most trouble are usually those who incur the largest bills, and pay them with the best grace. On this point Touchwood was a jewel of a customer. He never denied himself the gratification of the slightest whim, whatever expense he might himself incur, or whatever trouble he might give to those about him; and all was done under protestation that the matter in question was the most indifferent thing to him in the world. "What the devil did he care for Burgess's sauces, he that had eat his kouscousou, spiced with nothing but the sand of the desert? only it was a shame for Mrs. Dods to be without what every decent house, above the rank of an alehouse, ought to be largely provided with."

In short, he fussed, fretted, commanded, and was obeyed; kept the house in hot water, and yet was so truly good-natured

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when essential matters were in discussion, that it was impossible to bear him the least ill-will; so that Mrs. Dods, though in a moment of spleen she sometimes wished him at the top of Tintock, always ended by singing forth his praises. She could not, indeed, help suspecting that he was a Nabob, as well from his conversation about foreign parts as from his freaks of indulgence to himself, and generosity to others—attributes which she understood to be proper to most "Men of Ind." But although the reader has heard her testify a general dislike to this species of Fortune's favourites, Mrs. Dods had sense enough to know that a Nabob living in the neighbourhood, who raises the price of eggs and poultry upon the good housewives around, was very different from a Nabob residing within her own gates, drawing all his supplies from her own larder, and paying, without hesitation or question, whatever bills her conscience permitted her to send in. In short, to come back to the point at which we perhaps might have stopped some time since, landlady and guest were very much pleased with each other.

But Ennui finds entrance into every scene, when the gloss of novelty is over; and the fiend began to seize upon Mr. Touchwood just when he had got all matters to his mind in the Cleikum Inn—had instructed Dame Dods in the mysteries of curry and mullegatawny—drilled the chambermaid into the habit of making his bed at the angle recommended by Sir John Sinclair—and made some progress in instructing the hump-backed postilion in the Arabian mode of grooming. Pamphlets and newspapers, sent from London and from Edinburgh by loads, proved inadequate to rout this invader of Mr. Touchwood's comforts; and, at last, he bethought himself of company. The natural resource would have been the Well—but the traveller had a holy shivering of awe, which crossed him at the very recollection of Lady Penelope, who had worked him rather hard during his former brief residence; and although Lady Binks's beauty might have charmed an Asiatic by the plump graces of its contour, our senior was past the thoughts of a Sultana and a haram. At length a bright idea crossed his mind, and he suddenly demanded of Mrs. Dods, who was pouring out his tea for breakfast into a large cup of a very particular species of china, of which he had presented her with a service on condition of her rendering him this personal good office—

"Pray, Mrs. Dods, what sort of a man is your minister?"

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"He's just a man like other men, Mr. Touchwood," replied Meg Dods; "what sort of a man should he be?"

"A man like other men?—ay—that is to say, he has the usual complement of legs and arms, eyes and ears—But is he a sensible man?"

"No muckle o' that, sir," answered Dame Dods; "for if he was drinking this very tea that ye gat down from London wi' the mail, he wad mistake it for common bohea."

"Then he has not all his organs—wants a nose, or the use of one at least," said Mr. Touchwood; "the tea is right gunpowder—a perfect nosegay."

"Aweel, that may be," said the landlady; "but I have gi'en the minister a dram frae my ain best bottle of real Coniac brandy, and may I never stir frae the bit, if he didna commend my whisky when he set down the glass! There is no ane o' them in the Presbytery but himsell—ay, or in the Synod either—but wad hae kend whisky frae brandy."

"But what *sort* of man is he?—Has he learning?" demanded Touchwood.

"Learning?—aneugh o' that," answered Meg; "just dung donnart wi' learning—lets a' things about the Manse gang whilk gate they will, sae they dinna plague him upon the score. An awfu' thing it is to see sic an ill-redd-up house! If I had the twa tawpies that sorn upon the honest man ae week under my drilling, I think I wad show them how to sort a lodging!"

"Does he preach well?" asked the guest.

"Oh, weel aneugh, weel aneugh—sometimes he will fling in a lang word or a bit of learning that our farmers and bannet lairds canna sae weel follow—But what of that, as I am aye telling them?—them that pay stipend get aye the mair for their siller."

"Does he attend to his parish?—Is he kind to the poor?"

"Ower muckle o' that, Maister Touchwood—I am sure he makes the Word gude, and turns not away from those that ask o' him—his very pocket is picked by a wheen ne'er-do-weel blackguards, that gae sorning through the country."

"Sorning through the country, Mrs. Dods?—what would you think if you had seen the Fakirs, the Dervises, the Bonzes, the Imaums, the monks, and the mendicants, that I have seen?—But go on, never mind—Does this minister of yours come much into company?"

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"Company?—gae wa'," replied Meg, "he keeps nae company at a', neither in his ain house or ony gate else. He comes down in the morning in a lang ragged night-gown, like a potato bogle, and down he sits amang his books; and if they dinna bring him something to eat, the puir demented body has never the heart to cry for aught, and he has been kend to sit for ten hours thegither black fasting, whilk is a' mere papistrie, though he does it just out o' forget."

"Why, landlady, in that case, your parson is anything but the ordinary kind of man you described him—Forget his dinner!—the man must be mad—he shall dine with me to-day—he shall have such a dinner as, I'll be bound, he won't forget in a hurry."

"Ye'll maybe find that easier said than dune," said Mrs. Dods; "the honest man hasna, in a sense, the taste of his mouth—forby, he never dines out of his ain house—that is, when he dines at a'—A drink of milk and a bit of bread serves his turn, or maybe a cauld potato. It's a heathenish fashion of him, for as good a man as he is; for surely there is nae Christian man but loves his own bowels."

"Why, that may be," answered Touchwood; "but I have known many who took so much care of their own bowels, my good dame, as to have none for any one else. But come—bustle to the work—get us as good a dinner for two as you can set out—have it ready at three to an instant—get the old hock I had sent me from Cockburn—a bottle of the particular Indian Sherry—and another of your own old claret—fourth binn, you know, Meg. And stay, he is a priest, and must have port—have all ready, but don't bring the wine into the sun, as that silly fool Beck did the other day.—I can't go down to the larder myself, but let us have no blunders."

"Nae fear, nae fear," said Meg, with a toss of the head; "I need naebody to look into my larder but mysell, I trow—but it's an unco order of wine for twa folk, and ane o' them a minister."

"Why, you foolish person, is there not the woman up the village that has just brought another fool into the world, and will she not need sack and caudle, if we leave some of our wine?"

"A gude ale-posset wad set her better," said Meg; "however, if it's your will, it shall be my pleasure. But the like of sic a gentleman as yoursell never entered my doors!"

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The traveller was gone before she had completed the sentence; and, leaving Meg to bustle and maunder at her leisure, away he marched, with the haste that characterised all his motions when he had any new project in his head, to form an acquaintance with the minister of St. Ronan's, whom, while he walks down the street to the Manse, we will endeavour to introduce to the reader.

The Rev. Josiah Cargill was the son of a small farmer in the south of Scotland; and a weak constitution, joined to the disposition for study which frequently accompanies infirm health, induced his parents, though at the expense of some sacrifices, to educate him for the ministry. They were the rather led to submit to the privations which were necessary to support this expense, because they conceived from their family traditions, that he had in his veins some portion of the blood of that celebrated Boanerges of the Covenant, Donald Cargill, who was slain by the persecutors at the town of Queensferry, in the melancholy days of Charles II., merely because, in the plenitude of his sacerdotal power, he had cast out of the church, and delivered over to Satan by a formal excommunication, the King and Royal family, with all the ministers and courtiers thereunto belonging. But if Josiah was really derived from this uncompromising champion, the heat of the family spirit which he might have inherited was qualified by the sweetness of his own disposition, and the quiet temper of the times in which he had the good fortune to live. He was characterised by all who knew him as a mild, gentle, and studious lover of learning, who, in the quiet prosecution of his own sole object, the acquisition of knowledge, and especially of that connected with his profession, had the utmost indulgence for all whose pursuits were different from his own. His sole relaxations were those of a gentle, mild, and pensive temper, and were limited to a ramble, almost always solitary, among the woods and hills, in praise of which he was sometimes guilty of a sonnet, but rather because he could not help the attempt, than as proposing to himself the fame or the rewards which attend the successful poet. Indeed, far from seeking to insinuate his fugitive pieces into magazines or newspapers, he blushed at his poetical attempts even while alone, and, in fact, was rarely so indulgent to his vein as to commit them to paper.

From the same maid-like modesty of disposition, our student

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suppressed a strong natural turn towards drawing, although he was repeatedly complimented upon the few sketches which he made, by some whose judgment was generally admitted. It was, however, this neglected talent, which, like the swift feet of the stag in the fable, was fated to render him a service which he might in vain have expected from his worth and learning.

My Lord Bidmore, a distinguished connoisseur, chanced to be in search of a private tutor for his son and heir, the Honourable Augustus Bidmore, and for this purpose had consulted the Professor of Theology, who passed before him in review several favourite students, any of whom he conceived well suited for the situation; but still his answer to the important and unlooked-for question, "Did the candidate understand drawing?" was in the negative. The Professor, indeed, added his opinion, that such an accomplishment was neither to be desired nor expected in a student of theology; but, pressed hard with this condition as a *sine qua non*, he at length did remember a dreaming lad about the Hall, who seldom could be got to speak above his breath, even when delivering his essays, but was said to have a strong turn for drawing. This was enough for my Lord Bidmore, who contrived to obtain a sight of some of young Cargill's sketches, and was satisfied that, under such a tutor, his son could not fail to maintain that character for hereditary taste which his father and grandfather had acquired at the expense of a considerable estate, the representative value of which was now the painted canvas in the great gallery at Bidmore House.

Upon following up the inquiry concerning the young man's character, he was found to possess all the other necessary qualifications of learning and morals, in a greater degree than perhaps Lord Bidmore might have required; and, to the astonishment of his fellow-students, but more especially to his own, Josiah Cargill was promoted to the desired and desirable situation of private tutor to the Honourable Mr. Bidmore.

Mr. Cargill did his duty ably and conscientiously, by a spoiled though good-humoured lad, of weak health and very ordinary parts. He could not, indeed, inspire into him any portion of the deep and noble enthusiasm which characterises the youth of genius; but his pupil made such progress in each branch of his studies as his capacity enabled him to attain.

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He understood the learned languages, and could be very profound on the subject of various readings—he pursued science, and could class shells, pack mosses, and arrange minerals—he drew without taste, but with much accuracy; and although he attained no commanding height in any pursuit, he knew enough of many studies, literary and scientific, to fill up his time, and divert from temptation a head, which was none of the strongest in point of resistance.

Miss Augusta Bidmore, his lordship's only other child, received also the instructions of Cargill in such branches of science as her father chose she should acquire, and her tutor was capable to teach. But her progress was as different from that of her brother, as the fire of heaven differs from that grosser element which the peasant piles upon his smouldering hearth. Her acquirements in Italian and Spanish literature, in history, in drawing, and in all elegant learning, were such as to enchant her teacher, while at the same time it kept him on the stretch, lest, in her successful career, the scholar should outstrip the master.

Alas! such intercourse, fraught as it is with dangers arising out of the best and kindest, as well as the most natural feelings on either side, proved in the present, as in many other instances, fatal to the peace of the preceptor. Every feeling heart will excuse a weakness, which we shall presently find carried with it its own severe punishment. Cadenus, indeed, believe him who will, has assured us, that, in such a perilous intercourse, he himself preserved the limits which were unhappily transgressed by the unfortunate Vanessa, his more impassioned pupil:—

> "The innocent delight he took
> To see the virgin mind her book,
> Was but the master's secret joy,
> In school to hear the finest boy."

But Josiah Cargill was less fortunate, or less cautious. He suffered his fair pupil to become inexpressibly dear to him, before he discovered the precipice towards which he was moving under the direction of a blind and misplaced passion. He was indeed utterly incapable of availing himself of the opportunities afforded by his situation, to involve his pupil in the toils of a mutual passion. Honour and gratitude alike forbade such a line of conduct, even had it been consistent with the

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natural bashfulness, simplicity, and innocence of his disposition. To sigh and suffer in secret, to form resolutions of separating himself from a situation so fraught with danger, and to postpone from day to day the accomplishment of a resolution so prudent, was all to which the tutor found himself equal; and it is not improbable, that the veneration with which he regarded his patron's daughter, with the utter hopelessness of the passion which he nourished, tended to render his love yet more pure and disinterested.

At length the line of conduct which reason had long since recommended, could no longer be the subject of procrastination. Mr. Bidmore was destined to foreign travel for a twelvemonth, and Mr. Cargill received from his patron the alternative of accompanying his pupil, or retiring upon a suitable provision, the reward of his past instructions. It can hardly be doubted which he preferred; for while he was with young Bidmore, he did not seem entirely separated from his sister. He was sure to hear of Augusta frequently, and to see some part, at least, of the letters which she was to write to her brother; he might also hope to be remembered in these letters as her "good friend and tutor;" and to these consolations his quiet, contemplative, and yet enthusiastic disposition, clung as to a secret source of pleasure, the only one which life seemed to open to him.

But fate had a blow in store, which he had not anticipated. The chance of Augusta changing her maiden condition for that of a wife, probable as her rank, beauty, and fortune rendered such an event, had never once occurred to him; and although he had imposed upon himself the unwavering belief that she never could be his, he was inexpressibly affected by the intelligence that she had become the property of another.

The Honourable Mr. Bidmore's letters to his father soon after announced that poor Mr. Cargill had been seized with a nervous fever, and again, that his reconvalescence was attended with so much debility, it seemed both of mind and body, as entirely to destroy his utility as a travelling companion. Shortly after this the travellers separated, and Cargill returned to his native country alone, indulging upon the road in a melancholy abstraction of mind, which he had suffered to grow upon him since the mental shock which he had sustained, and which in time became the most characteristical feature of his demeanour. His meditations were not even disturbed by any anxiety about his future

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subsistence, although the cessation of his employment seemed to render that precarious. For this, however, Lord Bidmore had made provision; for, though a coxcomb where the fine arts were concerned, he was in other particulars a just and honourable man, who felt a sincere pride in having drawn the talents of Cargill from obscurity, and entertained due gratitude for the manner in which he had achieved the important task intrusted to him in his family.

His lordship had privately purchased from the Mowbray family the patronage or advowson of the living of St. Ronan's, then held by a very old incumbent, who died shortly afterwards: so that upon arriving in England he found himself named to the vacant living. So indifferent, however, did Cargill feel himself towards this preferment, that he might possibly not have taken the trouble to go through the necessary steps previous to his ordination, had it not been on account of his mother, now a widow, and unprovided for, unless by the support which he afforded her. He visited her in her small retreat in the suburbs of Marchthorn, heard her pour out her gratitude to Heaven, that she should have been granted life long enough to witness her son's promotion to a charge, which, in her eyes, was more honourable and desirable than an Episcopal see—heard her chalk out the life which they were to lead together in the humble independence which had thus fallen on him—he heard all this, and had no power to crush her hopes and her triumph by the indulgence of his own romantic feelings. He passed almost mechanically through the usual forms, and was inducted into the living of St. Ronan's.

Although fanciful and romantic, it was not in Josiah Cargill's nature to yield to unavailing melancholy; yet he sought relief, not in society, but in solitary study. His seclusion was the more complete, that his mother, whose education had been as much confined as her fortunes, felt awkward under her new dignities, and willingly acquiesced in her son's secession from society, and spent her whole time in superintending the little household, and in her way providing for all emergencies, the occurrence of which might call Josiah out of his favourite book-room. As old age rendered her inactive, she began to regret the incapacity of her son to superintend his own household, and talked something of matrimony, and the mysteries of the muckle wheel. To these admonitions Mr. Cargill returned only slight

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and evasive answers; and when the old lady slept in the village churchyard, at a reverend old age, there was no one to perform the office of superintendent in the minister's family. Neither did Josiah Cargill seek for any, but patiently submitted to all the evils with which a bachelor estate is attended, and which were at least equal to those which beset the renowned Mago-Pico during his state of celibacy.* His butter was ill churned, and declared by all but himself and the quean who made it, altogether uneatable; his milk was burnt in the pan, his fruit and vegetables were stolen, and his black stockings mended with blue and white thread.

For all these things the minister cared not, his mind ever bent upon far different matters. Do not let my fair readers do Josiah more than justice, or suppose that, like Beltenebros in the desert, he remained for years the victim of an unfortunate and misplaced passion. No—to the shame of the male sex be it spoken, that no degree of hopeless love, however desperate and sincere, can ever continue for years to imbitter life. There must be hope—there must be uncertainty—there must be reciprocity, to enable the tyrant of the soul to secure a dominion of very long duration over a manly and well-constituted mind, which is itself desirous to *will* its freedom. The memory of Augusta had long faded from Josiah's thoughts, or was remembered only as a pleasing, but melancholy and unsubstantial dream, while he was straining forward in pursuit of a yet nobler and coyer mistress, in a word, of Knowledge herself.

Every hour that he could spare from his parochial duties, which he discharged with zeal honourable to his heart and head, was devoted to his studies, and spent among his books. But this chase of wisdom, though in itself interesting and dignified, was indulged to an excess which diminished the respectability, nay the utility of the deceived student; and he forgot, amid the luxury of deep and dark investigations, that society has its claims, and that the knowledge which is unimparted, is necessarily a barren talent, and is lost to society, like the miser's concealed hoard, by the death of the proprietor. His studies were also under the additional disadvantage, that, being pursued for the gratification of a desultory longing after knowledge, and directed to no determined object, they turned on points rather curious than useful, and while they served for

* Note E. Mago-Pico.

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the amusement of the student himself, promised little utility to mankind at large.

Bewildered amid abstruse researches, metaphysical and historical, Mr. Cargill, living only for himself and his books, acquired many ludicrous habits, which exposed the secluded student to the ridicule of the world, and which tinged, though they did not altogether obscure, the natural civility of an amiable disposition, as well as the acquired habits of politeness which he had learned in the good society that frequented Lord Bidmore's mansion. He not only indulged in neglect of dress and appearance, and all those ungainly tricks which men are apt to acquire by living very much alone, but besides, and especially, he became probably the most abstracted and absent man of a profession peculiarly liable to cherish such habits. No man fell so regularly into the painful dilemma of mistaking, or, in Scottish phrase, *miskenning*, the person he spoke to, or more frequently inquired of an old maid for her husband, of a childless wife about her young people, of the distressed widower for the spouse at whose funeral he himself had assisted but a fortnight before; and none was ever more familiar with strangers whom he had never seen, or seemed more estranged from those who had a title to think themselves well known to him. The worthy man perpetually confounded sex, age, and calling; and when a blind beggar extended his hand for charity, he has been known to return the civility by taking off his hat, making a low bow, and hoping his worship was well.

Among his brethren, Mr. Cargill alternately commanded respect by the depth of his erudition, and gave occasion to laughter from his odd peculiarities. On the latter occasions he used abruptly to withdraw from the ridicule he had provoked; for notwithstanding the general mildness of his character, his solitary habits had engendered a testy impatience of contradiction, and a keener sense of pain arising from the satire of others, than was natural to his unassuming disposition. As for his parishioners, they enjoyed, as may reasonably be supposed, many a hearty laugh at their pastor's expense, and were sometimes, as Mrs. Dods hinted, more astonished than edified by his learning; for in pursuing a point of biblical criticism, he did not altogether remember that he was addressing a popular and unlearned assembly, not delivering a *concio ad clerum*—a mistake, not arising from any conceit of his learning, or wish to display it, but from the same absence

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of mind which induced an excellent divine, when preaching before a party of criminals condemned to death, to break off by promising the wretches, who were to suffer next morning, "the rest of the discourse at the first proper opportunity." But all the neighbourhood acknowledged Mr. Cargill's serious and devout discharge of his ministerial duties; and the poor parishioners forgave his innocent peculiarities, in consideration of his unbounded charity; while the heritors, if they ridiculed the abstractions of Mr. Cargill on some subjects, had the grace to recollect that they had prevented him from suing an augmentation of stipend, according to the fashion of the clergy around him, or from demanding at their hands a new manse, or the repair of the old one. He once, indeed, wished that they would amend the roof of his book room, which "rained in"* in a very pluvious manner; but receiving no direct answer from our friend Meiklewham, who neither relished the proposal nor saw means of eluding it, the minister quietly made the necessary repairs at his own expense, and gave the heritors no farther trouble on the subject.

Such was the worthy divine whom our *bon vivant* at the Cleikum Inn hoped to conciliate by a good dinner and Cockburn's particular; an excellent menstruum in most cases, but not likely to be very efficacious on the present occasion.

* *Scotticè* for "admitted the rain."

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

THE ACQUAINTANCE.

'Twixt us thus the difference trims:—
Using head instead of limbs,
You have read what I have seen;
Using limbs instead of head,
I have seen what you have read—
Which way does the balance lean?

BUTLER.

OUR traveller, rapid in all his resolutions and motions, strode stoutly down the street, and arrived at the Manse, which was, as we have already described it, all but absolutely ruinous. The total desolation and want of order about the door would

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have argued the place uninhabited, had it not been for two or three miserable tubs with suds, or such like sluttish contents, which were left there, that those who broke their shins among them might receive a sensible proof, that "here the hand of woman had been." The door being half off its hinges, the entrance was for the time protected by a broken harrow, which must necessarily be removed before entry could be obtained. The little garden, which might have given an air of comfort to the old house had it been kept in any order, was abandoned to a desolation, of which that of the sluggard was only a type; and the minister's man, an attendant always proverbial for doing half work, and who seemed in the present instance to do none, was seen among docks and nettles, solacing himself with the few gooseberries which remained on some moss-grown bushes. To him Mr. Touchwood called loudly, inquiring after his master; but the clown, conscious of being taken in flagrant delict, as the law says, fled from him like a guilty thing, instead of obeying his summons, and was soon heard *hupping* and *geeing* to the cart, which he had left on the other side of the broken wall.

Disappointed in his application to the man-servant, Mr. Touchwood knocked with his cane, at first gently, then harder, hollowed, bellowed, and shouted, in the hope of calling the attention of some one within doors, but received not a word in reply. At length, thinking that no trespass could be committed upon so forlorn and deserted an establishment, he removed the obstacles to entrance with such a noise as he thought must necessarily have alarmed some one, if there was any live person about the house at all. All was still silent; and, entering a passage where the damp walls and broken flags corresponded to the appearance of things out of doors, he opened a door to the left, which, wonderful to say, still had a latch remaining, and found himself in the parlour, and in the presence of the person whom he came to visit.

Amid a heap of books and other literary lumber, which had accumulated around him, sat, in his well-worn leathern elbow-chair, the learned minister of St. Ronan's; a thin, spare man, beyond the middle age, of a dark complexion, but with eyes which, though now obscured and vacant, had been once bright, soft, and expressive, and whose features seemed interesting, the rather that, notwithstanding the carelessness of his dress, he was in the habit of performing his ablutions with Eastern precision;

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Touchwood's visit to Mr. Cargill.—PAGE 182.

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for he had forgot neatness, but not cleanliness. His hair might have appeared much more disorderly, had it not been thinned by time, and disposed chiefly around the sides of his countenance and the back part of his head; black stockings, ungartered, marked his professional dress, and his feet were thrust into old slip-shod shoes, which served him instead of slippers. The rest of his garments, so far as visible, consisted in a plaid nightgown wrapt in long folds round his stooping and emaciated length of body, and reaching down to the slippers aforesaid. He was so intently engaged in studying the book before him, a folio of no ordinary bulk, that he totally disregarded the noise which Mr. Touchwood made in entering the room, as well as the coughs and hems with which he thought it proper to announce his presence.

No notice being taken of these inarticulate signals, Mr. Touchwood, however great an enemy he was to ceremony, saw the necessity of introducing his business, as an apology for his intrusion.

"Hem! sir—Ha, hem!—You see before you a person in some distress for want of society, who has taken the liberty to call on you as a good pastor, who may be, in Christian charity, willing to afford him a little of your company, since he is tired of his own."

Of this speech Mr. Cargill only understood the words "distress" and "charity," sounds with which he was well acquainted, and which never failed to produce some effect upon him. He looked at his visitor with lack-lustre eye, and, without correcting the first opinion which he had formed, although the stranger's plump and sturdy frame, as well as his nicely-brushed coat, glancing cane, and, above all, his upright and self-satisfied manner, resembled in no respect the dress, form, or bearing of a mendicant, he quietly thrust a shilling into his hand, and relapsed into the studious contemplation which the entrance of Touchwood had interrupted.

"Upon my word, my good sir," said his visitor, surprised at a degree of absence of mind which he could hardly have conceived possible, "you have entirely mistaken my object."

"I am sorry my mite is insufficient, my friend," said the clergyman, without again raising his eyes, "it is all I have at present to bestow."

"If you will have the kindness to look up for a moment, my

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good sir," said the traveller, "you may possibly perceive that you labour under a considerable mistake."

Mr. Cargill raised his head, recalled his attention, and, seeing that he had a well-dressed, respectable-looking person before him, he exclaimed in much confusion, "Ha!—yes—on my word, I was so immersed in my book—I believe—I think I have the pleasure to see my worthy friend, Mr. Lavender?"

"No such thing, Mr. Cargill," replied Mr. Touchwood. "I will save you the trouble of trying to recollect me—you never saw me before.—But do not let me disturb your studies—I am in no hurry, and my business can wait your leisure."

"I am much obliged," said Mr. Cargill; "have the goodness to take a chair, if you can find one—I have a train of thought to recover—a slight calculation to finish—and then I am at your command."

The visitor found among the broken furniture, not without difficulty, a seat strong enough to support his weight, and sat down, resting upon his cane, and looking attentively at his host, who very soon became totally insensible of his presence. A long pause of total silence ensued, only disturbed by the rustling leaves of the tomo from which Mr. Cargill seemed to be making extracts, and now and then by a little exclamation of surprise and inpatience, when he dipped his pen, as happened once or twice, into his snuff-box, instead of the ink-standish which stood beside it. At length, just as Mr. Touchwood began to think the scene as tedious as it was singular, the abstracted student raised his head, and spoke as if in soliloquy, "From Acon, Accor, or St. John d'Acre, to Jerusalem, how far?"

"Twenty-three miles north north-west," answered his visitor without hesitation.

Mr. Cargill expressed no more surprise at a question which he had put to himself being answered by the voice of another, than if he had found the distance on the map, and, indeed, was not probably aware of the medium through which his question had been solved; and it was the tenor of the answer alone which he attended to in his reply.—"Twenty-three miles—Ingulphus," laying his hand on the volume, "and Jeffrey Winesauf do not agree in this."

"They may both be d—d, then, for lying blockheads," answered the traveller.

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"You might have contradicted their authority, sir, without using such an expression," said the divine, gravely.

"I cry you mercy, Doctor," said Mr. Touchwood; "but would you compare these parchment fellows with me, that have made my legs my compasses over great part of the inhabited world?"

"You have been in Palestine, then?" said Mr. Cargill, drawing himself upright in his chair, and speaking with eagerness and with interest.

"You may swear that, Doctor, and at Acre too. Why, I was there the month after Boney had found it too hard a nut to crack.—I dined with Sir Sydney's chum, old Djezzar Pacha, and an excellent dinner we had, but for a dessert of noses and ears brought on after the last remove, which spoiled my digestion. Old Djezzar thought it so good a joke, that you hardly saw a man in Acre whose face was not as flat as the palm of my hand—Gad, I respect my olfactory organ, and set off the next morning as fast as the most cursed hard-trotting dromedary that ever fell to poor pilgrim's lot could contrive to tramp."

"If you have really been in the Holy Land, sir," said Mr. Cargill, whom the reckless gaiety of Touchwood's manner rendered somewhat suspicious of a trick, "you will be able materially to enlighten me on the subject of the Crusades."

"They happened before my time, Doctor," replied the traveller.

"You are to understand that my curiosity refers to the geography of the countries where these events took place," answered Mr. Cargill.

"Oh! as to that matter you are lighted on your feet," said Mr. Touchwood; "for the time present I can fit you. Turk, Arab, Copt, and Druse, I know every one of them, and can make you as well acquainted with them as myself. Without stirring a step beyond your threshold, you shall know Syria as well as I do.—But one good turn deserves another—in that case, you must have the goodness to dine with me."

"I go seldom abroad, sir," said the minister, with a good deal of hesitation, for his habits of solitude and seclusion could not be entirely overcome, even by the expectation raised by the traveller's discourse; "yet I cannot deny myself the pleasure of waiting on a gentleman possessed of so much experience."

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"Well, then," said Mr. Touchwood, "three be the hour—I never dine later, and always to a minute—and the place, the Cleikum Inn, up the way; where Mrs. Dods is at this moment busy in making ready such a dinner as your learning has seldom seen, Doctor, for I brought the receipts from the four different quarters of the globe."

Upon this treaty they parted; and Mr. Cargill, after musing for a short while upon the singular chance which had sent a living man to answer those doubts, for which he was in vain consulting ancient authorities, at length resumed, by degrees, the train of reflection and investigation which Mr. Touchwood's visit had interrupted, and in a short time lost all recollection of his episodical visitor, and of the engagement which he had formed.

Not so Mr. Touchwood, who, when not occupied with business of real importance, had the art, as the reader may have observed, to make a prodigious fuss about nothing at all. Upon the present occasion, he bustled in and out of the kitchen, till Mrs. Dods lost patience, and threatened to pin the dishclout to his tail; a menace which he pardoned, in consideration, that in all the countries which he had visited, which are sufficiently civilised to boast of cooks, these artists, toiling in their fiery element, have a privilege to be testy and impatient. He therefore retreated from the torrid region of Mrs. Dods's microcosm, and employed his time in the usual devices of loiterers, partly by walking for an appetite, partly by observing the progress of his watch towards three o'clock, when he had happily succeeded in getting an employment more serious. His table, in the blue parlour, was displayed with two covers, after the fairest fashion of the Cleikum Inn; yet the landlady, with a look "civil but sly," contrived to insinuate a doubt whether the clergyman would come, "when a' was dune."

Mr. Touchwood scorned to listen to such an insinuation until the fated hour arrived, and brought with it no Mr. Cargill. The impatient entertainer allowed five minutes for difference of clocks, and variation of time, and other five for the procrastination of one who went little into society. But no sooner were the last five minutes expended than he darted off for the Manse, not, indeed, much like a greyhound or a deer, but with the momentum of a corpulent and well-appetised elderly gentleman, who is in haste to secure his dinner. He bounced without

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ceremony into the parlour, where he found the worthy divine clothed in the same plaid nightgown, and seated in the very same elbow-chair, in which he had left him five hours before. His sudden entrance recalled to Mr. Cargill, not an accurate, but something of a general recollection, of what had passed in the morning, and he hastened to apologise with "Ha!—indeed—already?—upon my word, Mr. A—a—, I mean my dear friend—I am afraid I have used you ill—I forgot to order any dinner—but we will do our best.—Eppie—Eppie!"

Not at the first, second, nor third call, but *ex intervallo*, as the lawyers express it, Eppie, a bare-legged, shock-headed, thick-ankled, red-armed wench, entered, and announced her presence by an emphatic "What's your wull?"

"Have you got anything in the house for dinner, Eppie?"

"Naething but bread and milk, plenty o't—what should I have?"

"You see, sir," said Mr. Cargill, "you are like to have a Pythagorean entertainment; but you are a traveller, and have doubtless been in your time thankful for bread and milk."

"But never when there was anything better to be had," said Mr. Touchwood. "Come, Doctor, I beg your pardon, but your wits are fairly gone a wool-gathering; it was *I* invited *you* to dinner, up at the Inn yonder, not you me."

"On my word, and so it was," said Mr. Cargill; "I knew I was quite right—I knew there was a dinner engagement betwixt us, I was sure of that, and that is the main point.—Come, sir, I wait upon you."

"Will you not first change your dress?" said the visitor, seeing with astonishment that the divine proposed to attend him in his plaid nightgown; "why, we shall have all the boys in the village after us—you will look like an owl in sunshine, and they will flock round you like so many hedge-sparrows."

"I will get my clothes instantly," said the worthy clergyman; "I will get ready directly—I am really ashamed to keep you waiting, my dear Mr.—eh—eh—your name has this instant escaped me."

"It is Touchwood, sir, at your service; I do not believe you ever heard it before," answered the traveller.

"True—right—no more I have—well, my good Mr. Touchstone, will you sit down an instant until we see what we can

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do?—strange slaves we make ourselves to these bodies of ours, Mr. Touchstone—the clothing and the sustaining of them costs us much thought and leisure, which might be better employed in catering for the wants of our immortal spirits."

Mr. Touchwood thought in his heart that never had Brahmin or Gymnosophist less reason to reproach himself with excess in the indulgence of the table, or of the toilette, than the sage before him; but he assented to the doctrine, as he would have done to any minor heresy, rather than protract matters by farther discussing the point at present. In a short time the minister was dressed in his Sunday's suit, without any farther mistake than turning one of his black stockings inside out; and Mr. Touchwood, happy as was Boswell when he carried off Dr. Johnson in triumph to dine with Strachan and John Wilkes, had the pleasure of escorting him to the Cleikum Inn.

In the course of the afternoon they became more familiar, and the familiarity led to their forming a considerable estimate of each other's powers and acquirements. It is true, the traveller thought the student too pedantic, too much attached to systems, which, formed in solitude, he was unwilling to renounce, even when contradicted by the voice and testimony of experience; and, moreover, considered his utter inattention to the quality of what he ate and drank, as unworthy of a rational, that is, of a cooking creature, or of a being who, as defined by Johnson, holds his dinner as the most important business of the day. Cargill did not act up to this definition, and was, therefore, in the eyes of his new acquaintance, so far ignorant and uncivilised. What then? He was still a sensible, intelligent man, however abstemious and bookish.

On the other hand, the divine could not help regarding his new friend as something of an epicure or belly-god, nor could he observe in him either the perfect education, or the polished bearing, which mark the gentleman of rank, and of which, while he mingled with the world, he had become a competent judge. Neither did it escape him, that in the catalogue of Mr. Touchwood's defects, occurred that of many travellers, a slight disposition to exaggerate his own personal adventures, and to prose concerning his own exploits. But then his acquaintance with Eastern manners, existing now in the same state in which they were found during the time of the Crusades, formed a living commentary on the works of William of Tyre, Raymund

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of Saint Giles, the Moslem annals of Abulfaragi, and other historians of the dark period, with which his studies were at present occupied.

A friendship, a companionship at least, was therefore struck up hastily betwixt these two originals; and, to the astonishment of the whole parish of St. Ronan's, the minister thereof was seen once more leagued and united with an individual of his species, generally called among them the Cleikum Nabob. Their intercourse sometimes consisted in long walks, which they took in company, traversing, however, as limited a space of ground, as if it had been actually roped in for their pedestrian exercise. Their parade was, according to circumstances, a low haugh at the nether end of the ruinous hamlet, or the esplanade in front of the old castle; and, in either case, the direct longitude of their promenade never exceeded a hundred yards. Sometimes, but rarely, the divine took share of Mr. Touchwood's meal, though less splendidly set forth than when he was first invited to partake of it; for, like the unostentatious owner of the gold cup in Parnell's Hermit,

——"Still he welcomed, but with less of cost."

On these occasions the conversation was not of the regular and compacted nature which passes betwixt men, as they are ordinarily termed, of this world. On the contrary, the one party was often thinking of Saladin and Cœur de Lion, when the other was haranguing on Hyder Ali and Sir Eyre Coote. Still, however, the one spoke, and the other seemed to listen; and, perhaps, the lighter intercourse of society, where amusement is the sole object, can scarcely rest on a safer and more secure basis.

It was on one of the evenings when the learned divine had taken his place at Mr. Touchwood's social board, or rather at Mrs. Dods's,—for a cup of excellent tea, the only luxury which Mr. Cargill continued to partake of with some complacence, was the regale before them,—that a card was delivered to the Nabob.

"Mr. and Miss Mowbray see company at Shaws Castle on the twentieth current, at two o'clock—*déjeûner*—dresses in character admitted—A dramatic picture."—"See company? the more fools they," he continued, by way of comment. "See company?—choice phrases are ever commendable—and this piece of pasteboard is to intimate that one may go and meet all

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the fools of the parish, if they have a mind—in my time they asked the honour, or the pleasure, of a stranger's company. I suppose, by and by, we shall have in this country the ceremonial of a Bedouin's tent, where every ragged Hadgi, with his green turban, comes in slap without leave asked, and has his black paw among the rice, with no other apology than Salam Alicum.—'Dresses in character—Dramatic picture'—what new tomfoolery can that be?—but it does not signify.—Doctor! I say, Doctor!—but he is in the seventh heaven—I say, Mother Dods, you who know all the news—Is this the feast that was put off until Miss Mowbray should be better?"

"Troth is it, Maister Touchwood—they are no in the way of giving twa entertainments in one season—no very wise to gie ane maybe—but they ken best."

"I say, Doctor, Doctor!—Bless his five wits, he is charging the Moslemah with stout King Richard—I say, Doctor, do you know anything of these Mowbrays?"

"Nothing extremely particular," answered Mr. Cargill, after a pause; "it is an ordinary tale of greatness, which blazes in one century, and is extinguished in the next. I think Camden says, that Thomas Mowbray, who was Grand-Marshal of England, succeeded to that high office, as well as to the Dukedom of Norfolk, as grandson of Roger Bigot, in 1301."

"Pshaw, man, you are back into the fourteenth century—I mean these Mowbrays of St. Ronan's—now, don't fall asleep again until you have answered my question—and don't look so like a startled hare—I am speaking no treason."

The clergyman floundered a moment, as is usual with an absent man who is recovering the train of his ideas, or a somnambulist when he is suddenly awakened, and then answered, still with hesitation,—

"Mowbray of St. Ronan's!—ha—eh—I know—that is—I did know the family."

"Here they are going to give a masquerade, a *bal paré*, private theatricals, I think, and what not," handing him the card."

"I saw something of this a fortnight ago," said Mr. Cargill; "indeed, I either had a ticket myself, or I saw such a one as that."

"Are you sure you did not attend the party, Doctor?" said the Nabob.

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Who attend? I? you are jesting Mr. Touchwood."

"But are you quite positive?" demanded Mr. Touchwood, who had observed, to his infinite amusement, that the learned and abstracted scholar was so conscious of his own peculiarities, as never to be very sure on any such subject.

"Positive!" he repeated with embarrassment; "my memory is so wretched that I never like to be positive—but had I done anything so far out of my usual way, I must have remembered it, one would think—and—I *am* positive I was not there."

"Neither could you, Doctor," said the Nabob, laughing at the process by which his friend reasoned himself into confidence; "for it did not take place—it was adjourned, and this is the second invitation—there will be one for you, as you had a card to the former.—Come, Doctor, you must go—you and I will go together—I as an Imaum—I can say my Bismillah with any Hadgi of them all—You as a cardinal, or what you like best."

"Who, I?—it is unbecoming my station, Mr. Touchwood," said the clergyman—"a folly altogether inconsistent with my habits."

"All the better—you shall change your habits."

"You had better gang up and see them, Mr. Cargill," said Mrs. Dods; "for it's maybe the last sight ye may see of Miss Mowbray—they say she is to be married and off to England ane of thae odd-come-shortlies, wi' some of the gowks about the Waal down by."

"Married!" said the clergyman; "it is impossible."

"But where's the impossibility, Mr. Cargill, when ye see folk marry every day, and buckle them yoursell into the bargain?—Maybe ye think the puir lassie has a bee in her bannet; but ye ken yoursell if naebody but wise folk were to marry, the warld wad be ill peopled. I think it's the wise folk that keep single, like yoursell and me, Mr. Cargill.—Gude guide us!—are ye weel?—will ye taste a drap o' something?"

"Sniff at my otto of roses," said Mr. Touchwood; "the scent would revive the dead—why, what in the devil's name is the meaning of this?—you were quite well just now."

"A sudden qualm," said Mr. Cargill, recovering himself.

"Oh! Mr. Cargill," said Dame Dods, "this comes of your lang fasts."

"Right, dame," subjoined Mr. Touchwood; "and of break-

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ing them with sour milk and pease bannock—the least morsel of Christian food is rejected by the stomach, just as a small gentleman refuses the visit of a creditable neighbour, lest he see the nakedness of the land—ha! ha!"

"And there is really a talk of Miss Mowbray of St. Ronan's being married?" said the clergyman.

"Troth is there," said the dame; "it's Trotting Nelly's news; and though she likes a drappie, I dinna think she would invent a lee or carry ane—at least to me, that am a gude customer."

"This must be looked to," said Mr. Cargill, as if speaking to himself.

"In troth, and so it should," said Dame Dods; "it's a sin and a shame if they should employ the tinkling cymbal they ca' Chatterly, and sic a Presbyterian trumpet as yoursell in the land, Mr. Cargill; and if ye will take a fule's advice, ye winna let the multure be ta'en by your ain mill, Mr. Cargill."

"True, true, good Mother Dods," said the Nabob; "gloves and hat-bands are things to be looked after; and Mr. Cargill had better go down to this cursed festivity with me, in order to see after his own interest."

"I must speak with the young lady," said the clergyman, still in a brown study.

"Right, right, my boy of blackletter," said the Nabob; "with me you shall go, and we'll bring them to submission to mother-church, I warrant you—Why, the idea of being cheated in such a way, would scare a Santon* out of his trance.—What dress will you wear?"

"My own, to be sure," said the divine, starting from his reverie.

"True, thou art right again—they may want to knit the knot on the spot, and who would be married by a parson in masquerade?—We go to the entertainment though—it is a done thing."

The clergyman assented, provided he should receive an invitation; and as that was found at the Manse, he had no excuse for retracting, even if he had seemed to desire one.

* [Mahommedan hermit or enthusiast.]

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CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

FORTUNE'S FROLICS.

Count Basset.—We gentlemen, whose carriages run on the four aces, are apt to have a wheel out of order.

THE PROVOKED HUSBAND.

OUR history must now look a little backwards; and although it is rather foreign to our natural style of composition, it must speak more in narrative, and less in dialogue, rather telling what happened, than its effects upon the actors. Our promise, however, is only conditional, for we foresee temptations which may render it difficult for us exactly to keep it.

The arrival of the young Earl of Etherington at the salutiferous fountain of St. Ronan's had produced the strongest sensation; especially, as it was joined with the singular accident of the attempt upon his lordship's person, as he took a short cut through the woods upon foot, at a distance from his equipage and servants. The gallantry with which he beat off the highwayman, was only equal to his generosity; for he declined making any researches after the poor devil, although his lordship had received a severe wound in the scuffle.

Of the "three black Graces," as they have been termed by one of the most pleasing companions of our time, Law and Physic hastened to do homage to Lord Etherington, represented by Mr. Meiklewham and Dr. Quackleben; while Divinity, as favourable, though more coy, in the person of the Reverend Mr. Simon Chatterly, stood on tiptoe to offer any service in her power.

For the honourable reason already assigned, his lordship, after thanking Mr. Meiklewham, and hinting, that he might have different occasion for his services, declined his offer to search out the delinquent by whom he had been wounded; while to the care of the Doctor he subjected the cure of a smart flesh-wound in the arm, together with a slight scratch on the temple; and so very genteel was his behaviour on the occasion, that the Doctor, in his anxiety for his safety, enjoined him a month's course of the waters, if he would enjoy the comfort of a complete and perfect recovery. Nothing so frequent, he

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could assure his lordship, as the opening of cicatrised wounds; and the waters of St. Ronan's spring being, according to Dr. Quackleben, a remedy for all the troubles which flesh is heir to, could not fail to equal those of Barege, in facilitating the discharge of all splinters or extraneous matter, which a bullet may chance to incorporate with the human frame, to its great annoyance. For he was wont to say, that although he could not declare the waters which he patronised to be an absolute *panpharmacon*, yet he would with word and pen maintain, that they possessed the principal virtues of the most celebrated medicinal springs in the known world. In short, the love of Alpheus for Arethusa was a mere jest, compared to that which the Doctor entertained for his favourite fountain.

The new and noble guest, whose arrival so much illustrated these scenes of convalescence and of gaiety, was not at first seen so much at the ordinary, and other places of public resort, as had been the hope of the worthy company assembled. His health and his wound proved an excuse for making his visits to the society few and far between.

But when he did appear, his manners and person were infinitely captivating; and even the carnation-coloured silk handkerchief, which suspended his wounded arm, together with the paleness and languor which loss of blood had left on his handsome and open countenance, gave a grace to the whole person, which many of the ladies declared irresistible. All contended for his notice, attracted at once by his affability, and piqued by the calm and easy nonchalance with which it seemed to be blended. The scheming and selfish Mowbray, the coarse-minded and brutal Sir Bingo, accustomed to consider themselves, and to be considered, as the first men of the party, sunk into comparative insignificance. But chiefly Lady Penelope threw out the captivations of her wit and her literature; while Lady Binks, trusting to her natural charms, endeavoured equally to attract his notice. The other nymphs of the Spa held a little back, upon the principle of that politeness, which, at continental hunting parties, affords the first shot at a fine piece of game to the person of the highest rank present; but the thought throbbed in many a fair bosom, that their ladyships might miss their aim, in spite of the advantages thus allowed them, and that there might then be room for less exalted, but perhaps not less skilful markswomen, to try their chance.

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But while the Earl thus withdrew from public society, it was necessary, at least natural, that he should choose some one with whom to share the solitude of his own apartment; and Mowbray, superior in rank to the half-pay whisky-drinking Captain MacTurk—in dash to Winterblossom, who was broken down, and turned twaddler—and in tact and sense to Sir Bingo Binks—easily manœuvred himself into his lordship's more intimate society; and internally thanking the honest footpad, whose bullet had been the indirect means of secluding his intended victim from all society but his own, he gradually began to feel the way, and prove the strength of his antagonist, at the various games of skill and hazard which he introduced, apparently with the sole purpose of relieving the tedium of a sick-chamber.

Meiklewham, who felt, or affected, the greatest possible interest in his patron's success, and who watched every opportunity to inquire how his schemes advanced, received at first such favourable accounts as made him grin from ear to ear, rub his hands, and chuckle forth such bursts of glee as only the success of triumphant roguery could have extorted from him. Mowbray looked grave, however, and checked his mirth.

"There was something in it after all," he said, "that he could not perfectly understand. Etherington, a used hand—d—d sharp—up to everything, and yet he lost his money like a baby."

"And what the matter how he loses it, so you win it like a man?" said his legal friend and adviser.

"Why, hang it, I cannot tell," replied Mowbray—"were it not that I think he has scarce the impudence to propose such a thing to succeed, curse me but I should think he was coming the old soldier over me, and keeping up his game.—But no—he can scarce have the impudence to think of that.—I find, however, that he has done Wolverine—cleaned out poor Tom—though Tom wrote to me the precise contrary, yet the truth has since come out—Well, I shall avenge him, for I see his lordship is to be had as well as other folks."

Weel, Mr. Mowbray," said the lawyer, in a tone of affected sympathy, "ye ken your own ways best—but the heavens will bless a moderate mind. I would not like to see you ruin this poor lad, *funditus*, that is to say, out and out.—To lose some of the ready will do him no great harm, and maybe give him

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a lesson he may be the better of as long as he lives—but I wad not, as an honest man, wish you to go deeper—you should spare the lad, Mr. Mowbray."

"Who spared *me*, Meiklewham?" said Mowbray, with a look and tone of deep emphasis—"No, no—he must go through the mill—money and money's worth.—His seat is called Oakendale—think of that, Mick—Oakendale! Oh, name of thrice happy augury!—Speak not of mercy, Mick—the squirrels of Oakendale must be dismounted, and learn to go a-foot.—What mercy can the wandering lord of Troy expect among the Greeks? —The Greeks!—I am a very Suliote—the bravest of Greeks.

'I think not of pity, I think not of fear,
He neither must know who would serve the Vizier.'

And necessity, Mick," he concluded, with a tone something altered, "necessity is as unrelenting a leader as any Vizier or Pacha, whom Scanderbeg ever fought with, or Byron has sung."

Meiklewham echoed his patron's ejaculation with a sound betwixt a whine, a chuckle, and a groan; the first being designed to express his pretended pity for the destined victim; the second his sympathy with his patron's prospects of success; and the third being a whistle admonitory of the dangerous courses through which his object was to be pursued.

Suliote as he boasted himself, Mowbray had, soon after this conversation, some reason to admit that,

"When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war."

The light skirmishing betwixt the parties was ended, and the serious battle commenced with some caution on either side; each perhaps desirous of being master of his opponent's system of tactics, before exposing his own. Piquet, the most beautiful game at which a man can make sacrifice of his fortune, was one with which Mowbray had, for his misfortune perhaps, been accounted, from an early age, a great proficient, and in which the Earl of Etherington, with less experience, proved no novice. They now played for such stakes as Mowbray's state of fortune rendered considerable to him, though his antagonist appeared not to regard the amount. And they played with various success; for, though Mowbray at times returned with a smile of confidence the inquiring looks of his friend Meiklewham, there

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were other occasions on which he seemed to evade them, as if his own had a sad confession to make in reply.

These alternations, though frequent, did not occupy, after all, many days; for Mowbray, a friend of all hours, spent much of his time in Lord Etherington's apartment, and these few days were days of battle. In the meantime, as his lordship was now sufficiently recovered to join the party at Shaws Castle, and Miss Mowbray's health being announced as restored, that proposal was renewed, with the addition of a dramatic entertainment, the nature of which we shall afterwards have occasion to explain. Cards were anew issued to all those who had been formerly included in the invitation, and of course to Mr. Touchwood, as formerly a resident at the Well, and now in the neighbourhood; it being previously agreed among the ladies, that a Nabob, though sometimes a dingy or damaged commodity, was not to be rashly or unnecessarily neglected. As to the parson, he had been asked, of course, as an old acquaintance of the Mowbray house, not to be left out when the friends of the family were invited on a great scale; but his habits were well known, and it was no more expected that he would leave his manse on such an occasion, than that the kirk should loosen itself from its foundations.

It was after these arrangements had been made, that the Laird of St. Ronan's suddenly entered Meiklewham's private apartment with looks of exultation. The worthy scribe turned his spectacled nose towards his patron, and holding in one hand the bunch of papers which he had just been perusing, and in the other the tape with which he was about to tie them up again, suspended that operation to await with open eyes and ears the communication of Mowbray.

"I have done him!" he said, exultingly, yet in a tone of voice lowered almost to a whisper; "capoted his lordship for this bout—doubled my capital, Mick, and something more.—Hush, don't interrupt me—we must think of Clara now—she must share the sunshine, should it prove but a blink before a storm.—You know, Mick, these two d—d women, Lady Penelope and the Binks, have settled that they will have something like a *bal paré* on this occasion, a sort of theatrical exhibition, and that those who like it shall be dressed in character.—I know their meaning—they think Clara has no dress fit for such foolery, and so they hope to eclipse her; Lady Pen, with her

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old-fashioned ill-set diamonds, and my Lady Binks, with the new-fashioned finery which she swopt her character for. But Clara shan't be borne down so, by ——! I got that affected slut, Lady Binks's maid, to tell me what her mistress had set her mind on, and she is to wear a Grecian habit, forsooth, like one of Will Allan's Eastern subjects.—But here's the rub—there is only one shawl for sale in Edinburgh that is worth showing off in, and that is at the Gallery of Fashion.—Now, Mick, my friend, that shawl must be had for Clara, with the other trankums of muslin, and lace, and so forth, which you will find marked in the paper there.—Send instantly and secure it, for, as Lady Binks writes by to-morrow's post, your order can go by to-night's mail—There is a note for £100."

From a mechanical habit of never refusing anything, Meiklewham readily took the note, but having looked at it through his spectacles, he continued to hold it in his hand as he remonstrated with his patron.—"This is a' very kindly meant, St. Ronan's—very kindly meant; and I wad be the last to say that Miss Clara does not merit respect and kindness at your hand; but I doubt mickle if she wad care a bodle for thae braw things. Ye ken yoursell, she seldom alters her fashions. Od, she thinks her riding-habit dress eneugh for ony company; and if you were ganging by good looks, so it is—if she had a thought mair colour, poor dear."

"Well, well," said Mowbray impatiently, "let me alone to reconcile a woman and a fine dress."

"To be sure, ye ken best," said the writer; "but, after a', now, wad it no be better to lay by this hundred pound in Tam Turnpenny's, in case the young lady should want it afterhand, just for a sair foot?"

"You are a fool, Mick; what signifies healing a sore foot when there will be a broken heart in the case?—No, no—get the things as I desire you—we will blaze them down for one day at least; perhaps it will be the beginning of a proper dash."

"Weel, weel, I wish it may be so," answered Meiklewham; "but this young Earl—hae ye found the weak point?—Can ye get a decerniture against him, with expenses?—that is the question."

"I wish I could answer it," said Mowbray thoughtfully.—"Confound the fellow—he is a cut above me in rank and in society too—belongs to the great clubs, and is in with the Super-

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latives and Inaccessibles, and all that sort of folk.—My training has been a peg lower—but, hang it, there are better dogs bred in the kennel than in the parlour. I am up to him, I think—at least I will soon know, Mick, whether I am or no, and that is always one comfort. Never mind—do you execute my commission, and take care you name no names—I must save my little Abigail's reputation."

They parted, Meiklewham to execute his patron's commission—his patron to bring to the test those hopes, the uncertainty of which he could not disguise from his own sagacity.

Trusting to the continuance of his run of luck, Mowbray resolved to bring affairs to a crisis that same evening. Everything seemed in the outset to favour his purpose. They had dined together in Lord Etherington's apartments—his state of health interfered with the circulation of the bottle, and a drizzly autumnal evening rendered walking disagreeable, even had they gone no farther than the private stable where Lord Etherington's horses were kept, under the care of a groom of superior skill. Cards were naturally, almost necessarily, resorted to as the only alternative for helping away the evening, and piquet was, as formerly, chosen for the game.

Lord Etherington seemed at first indolently careless and indifferent about his play, suffering advantages to escape him, of which, in a more attentive state of mind, he could not have failed to avail himself. Mowbray upbraided him with his inattention, and proposed a deeper stake, in order to interest him. The young nobleman complied; and in the course of a few hands, the gamesters became both deeply engaged in watching and profiting by the changes of fortune. These were so many, so varied, and so unexpected, that the very souls of the players seemed at length centred in the event of the struggle; and, by dint of doubling stakes, the accumulated sum of a thousand pounds and upwards, upon each side, came to be staked in the issue of the game.—So large a risk included all those funds which Mowbray commanded by his sister's kindness, and nearly all his previous winnings, so to him the alternative was victory or ruin. He could not hide his agitation, however desirous to do so. He drank wine to supply himself with courage—he drank water to cool his agitation; and at length bent himself to play with as much care and attention as he felt himself enabled to command.

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In the first part of the game their luck appeared tolerably equal, and the play of both befitting gamesters who had dared to place such a sum on the cast. But, as it drew towards a conclusion, fortune altogether deserted him who stood most in need of her favour, and Mowbray, with silent despair, saw his fate depend on a single trick, and that with every odds against him, for Lord Etherington was elder hand. But how can fortune's favour secure any one who is not true to himself?—By an infraction of the laws of the game, which could only have been expected from the veriest bungler that ever touched a card, Lord Etherington called a point without showing it, and, by the ordinary rule, Mowbray was entitled to count his own—and in the course of that and the next hand, gained the game and swept the stakes. Lord Etherington showed chagrin and displeasure, and seemed to think that the rigour of the game had been more insisted upon than in courtesy it ought to have been, when men were playing for so small a stake. Mowbray did not understand this logic. A thousand pounds, he said, were in his eyes no nutshell; the rules of piquet were insisted on by all but boys and women; and, for his part, he had rather not play at all than not play the game.

"So it would seem, my dear Mowbray," said the Earl; "for, on my soul, I never saw so disconsolate a visage as thine during that unlucky game—it withdrew all my attention from my hand; and I may safely say your rueful countenance has stood me in a thousand pounds. If I could transfer thy long visage to canvas, I should have both my revenge and my money; for a correct resemblance would be worth not a penny less than the original has cost me."

"You are welcome to your jest, my lord," said Mowbray, "it has been well paid for; and I will serve you in ten thousand at the same rate. What say you?" he proceeded, taking up and shuffling the cards, "will you do yourself more justice in another game?—Revenge, they say, is sweet."

"I have no appetite for it this evening," said the Earl gravely; "if I had, Mowbray, you might come by the worse. I do not *always* call a point without showing it."

"Your lordship is out of humour with yourself for a blunder that might happen to any man—it was as much my good luck as a good hand would have been, and so Fortune be praised."

"But what if with this Fortune had nought to do?" replied

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Lord Etherington.—"What if, sitting down with an honest fellow and a friend like yourself, Mowbray, a man should rather choose to lose his own money, which he could afford, than to win what it might distress his friend to part with?"

"Supposing a case so far out of supposition, my lord," answered Mowbray, who felt the question ticklish—"for, with submission, the allegation is easily made, and is totally incapable of proof—I should say, no one had a right to think for me in such a particular, or to suppose that I played for a higher stake than was convenient."

"And thus your friend, poor devil," replied Lord Etherington, "would lose his money, and run the risk of a quarrel into the boot!—We will try it another way—Suppose this good-humoured and simple-minded gamester had a favour of the deepest import to ask of his friend, and judged it better to prefer his request to a winner than to a loser?"

"If this applies to me, my lord," replied Mowbray, "it is necessary I should learn how I can oblige your lordship."

"That is a word soon spoken, but so difficult to be recalled, that I am almost tempted to pause—but yet it must be said.—Mowbray, you have a sister."

Mowbray started.—"I have indeed a sister, my lord; but I can conceive no case in which her name can enter with propriety into our present discussion."

"Again in the menacing mood!" said Lord Etherington, in his former tone; "now here is a pretty fellow—he would first cut my throat for having won a thousand pounds from me, and then for offering to make his sister a countess!"

"A countess, my lord?" said Mowbray; "you are but jesting—you have never even seen Clara Mowbray."

"Perhaps not—but what then?—I may have seen her picture, as Puff says in the Critic, or fallen in love with her from rumour—or, to save farther suppositions, as I see they render you impatient, I may be satisfied with knowing that she is a beautiful and accomplished young lady, with a large fortune."

"What fortune do you mean, my lord?" said Mowbray, recollecting with alarm some claims which, according to Meiklewham's view of the subject, his sister might form upon his property.—"What estate?—there is nothing belongs to our family save these lands of St. Ronan's, or what is left of them; and of these I am, my lord, an undoubted heir of entail in possession."

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"Be it so," said the Earl, "for I have no claim on your mountain realms here, which are, doubtless,

——— 'renown'd of old
For knights, and squires, and barons bold;'

my views respect a much richer, though less romantic domain —a large manor, hight Nettlewood. House old, but standing in the midst of such glorious oaks—three thousand acres of land, arable, pasture, and woodland, exclusive of the two closes occupied by Widow Hodge and Goodman Trampclod—manorial rights—mines and minerals—and the devil knows how many good things beside, all lying in the vale of Bever."

"And what has my sister to do with all this?" asked Mowbray in great surprise.

"Nothing; but that it belongs to her when she becomes Countess of Etherington."

"It is, then, your lordship's property already?"

"No, by Jove! nor can it, unless your sister honours me with her approbation of my suit," replied the Earl.

"This is a sorer puzzle than one of Lady Penelope's charades, my lord," said Mr. Mowbray; "I must call in the assistance of the Reverend Mr. Chatterly."

"You shall not need," said Lord Etherington; "I will give you the key, but listen to me with patience.—You know that we nobles of England, less jealous of our sixteen quarters than those on the Continent, do not take scorn to line our decayed ermines with a little cloth of gold from the city; and my grandfather was lucky enough to get a wealthy wife, with a halting pedigree,—rather a singular circumstance, considering that her father was a countryman of yours. She had a brother, however, still more wealthy than herself, and who increased his fortune by continuing to carry on the trade which had first enriched his family. At length he summed up his books, washed his hands of commerce, and retired to Nettlewood, to become a gentleman; and here my much respected grand-uncle was seized with the rage of making himself a man of consequence. He tried what marrying a woman of family would do; but he soon found that, whatever advantage his family might derive from his doing so, his own condition was but little illustrated. He next resolved to become a man of family himself. His father had left Scotland when very young, and bore, I blush to say, the

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vulgar name of Scrogie. This hapless dissyllable my uncle carried in person to the herald office in Scotland; but neither Lyon, nor Marchmont, nor Islay, nor Snowdon, neither herald nor pursuivant, would patronise Scrogie.—Scrogie!—there could nothing be made out of it—so that my worthy relative had recourse to the surer side of the house, and began to found his dignity on his mother's name of Mowbray. In this he was much more successful, and I believe some sly fellow stole for him a slip from your own family tree, Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's, which, I dare say, you have never missed. At anyrate, for his *argent* and *or*, he got a handsome piece of parchment, blazoned with a white lion for Mowbray, to be borne quarterly, with three stunted or scrog-bushes for Scrogie, and became thenceforth Mr. Scrogie Mowbray, or rather, as he subscribed himself, Reginald (his former Christian name was Ronald) S. Mowbray. He had a son who most undutifully laughed at all this, refused the honours of the high name of Mowbray, and insisted on retaining his father's original appellative of Scrogie, to the great annoyance of his said father's ears, and damage of his temper."

"Why, faith, betwixt the two," said Mowbray, "I own I should have preferred my own name, and I think the old gentleman's taste rather better than the young one's."

"True; but both wilful, absurd originals, with a happy obstinacy of temper, whether derived from Mowbray or Scrogie I know not, but which led them so often into opposition, that the offended father, Reginald S. Mowbray, turned his recusant son, Scrogie, fairly out of doors; and the fellow would have paid for his plebeian spirit with a vengeance, had he not found refuge with a surviving partner of the original Scrogie of all, who still carried on the lucrative branch of traffic by which the family had been first enriched. I mention these particulars to account, in so far as I can, for the singular predicament in which I now find myself placed."

"Proceed, my lord," said Mr. Mowbray; "there is no denying the singularity of your story, and I presume you are quite serious in giving me such an extraordinary detail."

"Entirely so, upon my honour—and a most serious matter it is, you will presently find. When my worthy uncle, Mr. S. Mowbray (for I will not call him Scrogie even in the grave), paid his debts to nature, everybody concluded he would be found to have disinherited his son, the unfilial Scrogie, and so

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far everybody was right—But it was also generally believed that he would settle the estate on my father, Lord Etherington, the son of his sister, and therein every one was wrong. For my excellent grand-uncle had pondered with himself, that the favoured name of Mowbray would take no advantage, and attain no additional elevation, if his estate of Nettlewood (otherwise called Mowbray Park) should descend to our family without any condition; and with the assistance of a sharp attorney, he settled it on me, then a schoolboy, *on condition* that I should, before attaining the age of twenty-five complete, take unto myself in holy wedlock a young lady of good fame, of the name of Mowbray, and, by preference, of the house of St. Ronan's, should a damsel of that house exist.—Now my riddle is read."

"And a very extraordinary one it is," replied Mowbray, thoughtfully.

"Confess the truth," said Lord Etherington, laying his hand on his shoulder; "you think the story will bear a grain of a scruple of doubt, if not a whole scruple itself?"

"At least, my lord," answered Mowbray, "your lordship will allow, that, being Miss Mowbray's only near relation, and sole guardian, I may, without offence, pause upon a suit for her hand, made under such odd circumstances."

"If you have the least doubt either respecting my rank or fortune, I can give, of course, the most satisfactory references," said the Earl of Etherington.

"That I can easily believe, my lord," said Mowbray; "nor do I in the least fear deception, where detection would be so easy. Your lordship's proceedings towards me, too" (with a conscious glance at the bills he still held in his hand), "have, I admit, been such as to intimate some such deep cause of interest as you have been pleased to state. But it seems strange that your lordship should have permitted years to glide away, without so much as inquiring after the young lady, who, I believe, is the only person qualified, as your grand-uncle's will requires, with whom you can form an alliance. It appears to me, that long before now, this matter ought to have been investigated; and that, even now, it would have been more natural and more decorous to have at least seen my sister before proposing for her hand."

"On the first point, my dear Mowbray," said Lord Etherington, "I am free to own to you, that, without meaning your

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sister the least affront, I would have got rid of this clause if I could; for every man would fain choose a wife for himself, and I feel in no hurry to marry at all. But the rogue-lawyers, after taking fees, and keeping me in hand for years, have at length roundly told me the clause must be complied with, or Nettlewood must have another master. So I thought it best to come down here in person in order to address the fair lady; but as accident has hitherto prevented my seeing her, and as I found in her brother a man who understands the world, I hope you will not think the worse of me, that I have endeavoured in the outset to make you my friend. Truth is, I shall be twenty-five in the course of a month; and without your favour, and the opportunities which only you can afford me, that seems a short time to woo and win a lady of Miss Mowbray's merit."

"And what is the alternative if you do not form this proposed alliance, my lord?" said Mowbray.

"The bequest of my grand-uncle lapses," said the Earl, "and fair Nettlewood, with its old house, and older oaks, manorial rights, Hodge Trampclod, and all, devolves on a certain cousin-german of mine, whom Heaven of his mercy confound!"

"You have left yourself little time to prevent such an event, my lord," said Mowbray; "but things being as I now see them, you shall have what interest I can give you in the affair.—We must stand, however, on more equal terms, my lord—I will condescend so far as to allow it would have been inconvenient for me at this moment to have lost that game, but I cannot in the circumstances think of acting as if I had fairly won it. We must draw stakes, my lord."

"Not a word of that, if you really mean me kindly, my dear Mowbray. The blunder was a real one, for I was indeed thinking, as you may suppose, on other things than the showing my point—All was fairly lost and won.—I hope I shall have opportunities of offering real services, which may perhaps give me some right to your partial regard—at present we are on equal footing on all sides—perfectly so."

"If your lordship thinks so," said Mowbray—and then passing rapidly to what he felt he could say with more confidence—"Indeed, at any rate, no personal obligation to myself could prevent my doing my full duty as guardian to my sister."

"Unquestionably, I desire nothing else," replied the Earl of Etherington.

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"I must therefore understand that your lordship is quite serious in your proposal; and that it is not to be withdrawn, even if, upon acquaintance with Miss Mowbray, you should not perhaps think her so deserving of your lordship's attentions as report may have spoken her."

"Mr. Mowbray," replied the Earl, "the treaty between you and me shall be as definite as if I were a sovereign prince, demanding in marriage the sister of a neighbouring monarch, whom, according to royal etiquette, he neither has seen nor could see. I have been quite frank with you, and I have stated to you that my present motives for entering upon negotiation are not personal, but territorial; when I know Miss Mowbray, I have no doubt they will be otherwise. I have heard she is beautiful."

"Something of the palest, my lord," answered Mowbray.

"A fine complexion is the first attraction which is lost in the world of fashion, and that which it is easiest to replace."

"Dispositions, my lord, may differ," said Mowbray, "without faults on either side. I presume your lordship has inquired into my sister's. She is amiable, accomplished, sensible, and high-spirited; but yet"——

"I understand you, Mr. Mowbray, and will spare you the pain of speaking out. I have heard Miss Mowbray is in some respects—particular; to use a broader word—a little whimsical. —No matter. She will have the less to learn when she becomes a countess, and a woman of fashion."

"Are you serious, my lord?" said Mowbray.

"I am—and I will speak my mind still more plainly. I have a good temper, and excellent spirits, and can endure a good deal of singularity in those I live with. I have no doubt your sister and I will live happily together—But in case it should prove otherwise, arrangements may be made previously, which will enable us in certain circumstances to live happily apart. My own estate is large, and Nettlewood will bear dividing."

"Nay, then," said Mowbray, "I have little more to say —nothing indeed remains for inquiry, so far as your lordship is concerned. But my sister must have free liberty of choice—so far as I am concerned, your lordship's suit has my interest."

"And I trust we may consider it as a done thing?"

"With Clara's approbation—certainly," answered Mowbray.

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"I trust there is no chance of personal repugnance on the young lady's part?" said the young peer.

"I anticipate nothing of the kind, my lord," answered Mowbray, "as I presume there is no reason for any; but young ladies will be capricious, and if Clara, after I have done and said all that a brother ought to do, should remain repugnant, there is a point in the exertion of my influence which it would be cruelty to pass."

The Earl of Etherington walked a turn through the apartment, then paused, and said in a grave and doubtful tone, "In the meanwhile, I am bound, and the young lady is free, Mowbray. Is this quite fair?"

"It is what happens in every case, my lord, where a gentleman proposes for a lady," answered Mowbray; "he must remain, of course, bound by his offer, until, within a reasonable time, it is accepted or rejected. It is not my fault that your lordship has declared your wishes to me, before ascertaining Clara's inclination. But while as yet the matter is between ourselves—I make you welcome to draw back if you think proper. Clara Mowbray needs not push for a catch-match."

"Nor do I desire," said the young nobleman, "any time to reconsider the resolution which I have confided to you. I am not in the least fearful that I shall change my mind on seeing your sister, and I am ready to stand by the proposal which I have made to you.—If, however, you feel so extremely delicately on my account," he continued, "I can see and even converse with Miss Mowbray at this fête of yours, without the necessity of being at all presented to her—The character which I have assumed in a manner obliges me to wear a mask."

"Certainly," said the Laird of St. Ronan's, "and I am glad, for both our sakes, your lordship thinks of taking a little law upon this occasion."

"I shall profit nothing by it," said the Earl; "my doom is fixed before I start—but if this mode of managing the matter will save your conscience, I have no objection to it—it cannot consume much time, which is what I have to look to."

They then shook hands and parted, without any farther discourse which could interest the reader.

Mowbray was glad to find himself alone, in order to think over what had happened, and to ascertain the state of his own mind, which at present was puzzling even to himself. He

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could not but feel that much greater advantages of every kind might accrue to himself and his family from the alliance of the wealthy young Earl, than could have been derived from any share of his spoils which he had proposed to gain by superior address in play, or greater skill on the turf. But his pride was hurt when he recollected that he had placed himself entirely in Lord Etherington's power; and the escape from absolute ruin which he had made, solely by the sufferance of his opponent, had nothing in it consolatory to his wounded feelings. He was lowered in his own eyes, when he recollected how completely the proposed victim of his ingenuity had seen through his schemes, and only abstained from baffling them entirely, because to do so suited best with his own. There was a shade of suspicion, too, which he could not entirely eradicate from his mind. —What occasion had this young nobleman to preface, by the voluntary loss of a brace of thousands, a proposal which must have been acceptable in itself, without any such sacrifice? And why should he, after all, have been so eager to secure his accession to the proposed alliance, before he had ever seen the lady who was the object of it? However hurried for time, he might have waited the event at least of the entertainment at Shaws Castle, at which Clara was necessarily obliged to make her appearance. —Yet such conduct, however unusual, was equally inconsistent with any sinister intentions; since the sacrifice of a large sum of money, and the declaration of his views upon a portionless young lady of family, could scarcely be the preface to any unfair practice. So that, upon the whole, Mowbray settled, that what was uncommon in the Earl's conduct arose from the hasty and eager disposition of a rich young Englishman, to whom money is of little consequence, and who is too headlong in pursuit of the favourite plan of the moment, to proceed in the most rational or most ordinary manner. If, however, there should prove anything farther in the matter than he could at present discover, Mowbray promised himself that the utmost circumspection on his part could not fail to discover it, and that in full time to prevent any ill consequences to his sister or himself.

Immersed in such cogitations, he avoided the inquisitive presence of Mr. Meiklewham, who, as usual, had been watching for him to learn how matters were going on; and although it was now late, he mounted his horse, and rode hastily to Shaws Castle. On the way, he deliberated with himself whether to mention to

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his sister the application which had been made to him, in order to prepare her to receive the young Earl, as a suitor, favoured with her brother's approbation. "But no, no, no;" such was the result of his contemplation. "She might take it into her head that his thoughts were bent less upon having her for a Countess, than on obtaining possession of his grand-uncle's estate. We must keep quiet," concluded he, "until her personal appearance and accomplishments may appear at least to have some influence upon his choice. We must say nothing till this blessed entertainment has been given and received."

CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

A LETTER.

"Has he so long held out with me untired,
And stops he now for breath?—Well—Be it so."

RICHARD III.

MOWBRAY had no sooner left the Earl's apartment, than the latter commenced an epistle to a friend and associate, which we lay before the reader, as best calculated to illustrate the views and motives of the writer. It was addressed to Captain Jekyl of the —— regiment of Guards, at the Green Dragon, Harrogate, and was of the following tenor:—

"DEAR HARRY,

"I have expected you here these ten days past, anxiously as ever man was looked for; and have now to charge your absence as high treason to your sworn allegiance. Surely you do not presume, like one of Napoleon's new-made monarchs, to grumble for independence, as if your greatness were of your own making, or as if I had picked you out of the whole of St. James's coffee-house to hold my back-hand, for your sake, forsooth, not for my own? Wherefore, lay aside all your own proper business, be it the pursuit of dowagers, or the plucking of pigeons, and instantly repair to this place, where I may speedily want your assistance. —*May* want it, said I? Why, most negligent of friends and allies, I *have* wanted it already, and that when it might have

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done me yeoman's service. Know that I have had an affair since I came hither—have got hurt myself, and have nearly shot my friend; and if I had, I might have been hanged for it, for want of Harry Jekyl to bear witness in my favour. I was so far on my road to this place, when, not choosing, for certain reasons, to pass through the old village, I struck by a footpath into the woods which separate it from the new Spa, leaving my carriage and people to go the carriage-way. I had not walked half-a-mile when I heard the footsteps of some one behind, and looking round, what should I behold but the face in the world which I most cordially hate and abhor—I mean that which stands on the shoulders of my right trusty and well-beloved cousin and counsellor, Saint Francis. He seemed as much confounded as I was at our unexpected meeting; and it was a minute ere he found breath to demand what I did in Scotland, contrary to my promise, as he was pleased to express it. I retaliated, and charged him with being here, in contradiction to his. He justified, and said he had only come down upon the express information that I was upon my road to St. Ronan's. Now, Harry, how the devil should he have known this, hadst thou been quite faithful? for I am sure, to no ear but thine own did I breathe a whisper of my purpose.—Next, with the insolent assumption of superiority, which he founds on what he calls the rectitude of his purpose, he proposed we should both withdraw from a neighbourhood into which we could bring nothing but wretchedness.—I have told you how difficult it is to cope with the calm and resolute manner that the devil gifts him with on such occasions; but I was determined he should not carry the day this time. I saw no chance for it, however, but to put myself into a towering passion, which, thank Heaven, I can always do on short notice. I charged him with having imposed formerly on my youth, and made himself judge of my rights; and I accompanied my defiance with the strongest terms of irony and contempt, as well as with demand of instant satisfaction. I had my travelling pistols with me (*et pour cause*), and, to my surprise, my gentleman was equally provided. For fair play's sake I made him take one of my pistols—right Kuchenritters—a brace of balls in each, but that circumstance I forgot. I would fain have argued the matter a little longer; but I thought at the time, and think still, that the best arguments which he and I can exchange must come from the point of the sword, or the

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muzzle of the pistol.—We fired nearly together, and I think both dropped—I am sure I did, but recovered in a minute, with a damaged arm and a scratch on the temple—it was the last which stunned me—so much for double-loaded pistols. My friend was invisible, and I had nothing for it but to walk to the Spa, bleeding all the way like a calf, and tell a raw-head-and-bloody-bone story about a footpad, which, but for my earldom, and my gory locks, no living soul would have believed.

"Shortly after, when I had been installed in a sick-room, I had the mortification to learn that my own impatience had brought all this mischief upon me, at a moment when I had every chance of getting rid of my friend without trouble, had I but let him go on his own errand; for it seems he had an appointment that morning with a booby Baronet, who is said to be a bullet-slitter, and would perhaps have rid me of Saint Francis without any trouble or risk on my part. Meantime, his non-appearance at this rendezvous has placed Master Francis Tyrrel, as he chooses to call himself, in the worst odour possible with the gentry at the Spring, who have denounced him as a coward and no gentleman.—What to think of the business myself, I know not; and I much want your assistance to see what can have become of this fellow, who, like a spectre of ill omen, has so often thwarted and baffled my best plans. My own confinement renders me inactive, though my wound is fast healing. Dead he cannot be; for had he been mortally wounded, we should have heard of him somewhere or other—he could not have vanished from the earth like a bubble of the elements. Well and sound he cannot be; for, besides that I am sure I saw him stagger and drop, firing his pistol as he fell, I know him well enough to swear, that had he not been severely wounded, he would have first pestered me with his accursed presence and assistance, and then walked forward with his usual composure to settle matters with Sir Bingo Binks. No—no—Saint Francis is none of those who leave such jobs half finished—it is but doing him justice to say he has the devil's courage to back his own deliberate impertinence. But then, if wounded severely, he must be still in this neighbourhood, and probably in concealment—this is what I must discover, and I want your assistance in my inquiries among the natives.—Haste hither, Harry, as ever you look for good at my hand.

"A good player, Harry, always studies to make the best of

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bad cards—and so I have endeavoured to turn my wound to some account; and it has given me the opportunity to secure Monsieur le Frere in my interests. You may say, very truly, that it is of consequence to me to know the character of this new actor on the disordered scene of my adventures.—Know, then, he is that most incongruous of all monsters—a Scotch Buck—how far from being buck of the season you may easily judge. Every point of national character is opposed to the pretensions of this luckless race, when they attempt to take on them a personage which is assumed with so much facility by their brethren of the Isle of Saints. They are a shrewd people, indeed, but so destitute of ease, grace, pliability of manners, and insinuation of address, that they eternally seem to suffer actual misery in their attempts to look gay and careless. Then their pride heads them back at one turn, their poverty at another, their pedantry at a third, their *mauvaise honte* at a fourth; and with so many obstacles to make them bolt off the course, it is positively impossible they should win the plate. No, Harry, it is the grave folk in Old England who have to fear a Caledonian invasion—they will make no conquests in the world of fashion. Excellent bankers the Scots may be, for they are eternally calculating how to add interest to principal;—good soldiers, for they are, if not such heroes as they would be thought, as brave, I suppose, as their neighbours, and much more amenable to discipline;—lawyers they are born; indeed every country gentleman is bred one, and their patient and crafty disposition enables them, in other lines, to submit to hardships which other natives could not bear, and avail themselves of advantages which others would let pass under their noses unavailingly. But assuredly Heaven did not form the Caledonian for the gay world; and his efforts at ease, grace, and gaiety, resemble only the clumsy gambols of the ass in the fable. Yet the Scot has his sphere too (in his own country only), where the character which he assumes is allowed to pass current. This Mowbray, now—this brother-in-law of mine—might do pretty well at a Northern Meeting, or the Leith races, where he could give five minutes to the sport of the day, and the next half-hour to country politics, or to farming; but it is scarce necessary to tell you, Harry, that this half fellowship will not pass on the better side of the Tweed.

"Yet, for all I have told you, this trout was not easily

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tickled; nor should I have made much of him, had he not, in the plenitude of his northern conceit, entertained that notion of my being a good subject of plunder, which you had contrived (blessing on your contriving brain!) to insinuate into him by means of Wolverine. He commenced this hopeful experiment, and, as you must have anticipated, caught a Tartar with a vengeance. Of course, I used my victory only so far as to secure his interest in accomplishing my principal object; and yet I could see my gentleman's pride was so much injured in the course of the negotiation, that not all the advantages which the match offered to his damned family, were able entirely to subdue the chagrin arising from his defeat. He did gulp it down, though, and we are friends and allies for the present at least—not so cordially so, however, as to induce me to trust him with the whole of the strangely complicated tale. The circumstance of the will it was necessary to communicate, as affording a sufficiently strong reason for urging my suit; and this partial disclosure enabled me for the present to dispense with farther confidence.

"You will observe, that I stand by no means secure; and besides the chance of my cousin's re-appearance—a certain event, unless he is worse than I dare hope for—I have perhaps to expect the fantastic repugnance of Clara herself, or some sulky freak on her brother's part.—In a word—and let it be such a one as conjurors raise the devil with—Harry Jekyl, I *want* you.

"As well knowing the nature of my friend, I can assure you that his own interest, as well as mine, may be advanced by his coming hither on duty. Here is a blockhead whom I already mentioned, Sir Bingo Binks, with whom something may be done worth *your* while, though scarce worth *mine*. The Baronet is a perfect buzzard, and when I came here he was under Mowbray's training. But the awkward Scot had plucked half-a-dozen pen-feathers from his wing with so little precaution, that the Baronet has become frightened and shy, and is now in the act of rebelling against Mowbray, whom he both hates and fears—the least backing from a knowing hand like you, and the bird becomes your own, feathers and all.—Moreover,

'——— by my life,
This Bingo hath a mighty pretty wife.'

A lovely woman, Harry—rather plump, and above the middle

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size—quite your taste—A Juno in beauty, looking with such scorn on her husband, whom she despises and hates, and seeming, as if she *could* look so differently on any one whom she might like better, that, on my faith, 'twere sin not to give her occasion. If you please to venture your luck, either with the knight or the lady, you shall have fair play, and no interference —that is, provided you appear upon this summons; for, otherwise, I may be so placed, that the affairs of the knight and the lady may fall under my own immediate cognisance. And so, Harry, if you wish to profit by these hints, you had best make haste, as well for your own concerns, as to assist me in mine.

"Yours, Harry, as you behave yourself,

"ETHERINGTON."

Having finished this eloquent and instructive epistle, the young Earl demanded the attendance of his own valet, Solmes, whom he charged to put it into the post-office without delay, and with his own hand.

CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

THEATRICALS.

The play's the thing.—HAMLET.

THE important day had now arrived, the arrangements for which had for some time occupied all the conversation and thoughts of the good company at the well of St. Ronan's. To give it, at the same time, a degree of novelty and consequence, Lady Penelope Penfeather had long since suggested to Mr. Mowbray, that the more gifted and accomplished part of the guests might contribute to furnish out entertainment for the rest, by acting a few scenes of some popular drama; an accomplishment in which her self-conceit assured her that she was peculiarly qualified to excel. Mr. Mowbray, who seemed on this occasion to have thrown the reins entirely into her ladyship's hands, made no objection to the plan which she proposed, excepting that the old-fashioned hedges and walks of the garden at Shaws Castle must necessarily serve for stage and scenery, as

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there was no time to fit up the old hall for the exhibition of the proposed theatricals.* But upon inquiry among the company, this plan was wrecked upon the ordinary shelve, to wit, the difficulty of finding performers who would consent to assume the lower characters of the drama. For the first parts there were candidates more than enough; but most of these were greatly too high-spirited to play the fool, except they were permitted to top the part. Then amongst the few unambitious underlings, who could be coaxed or cajoled to undertake subordinate characters, there were so many bad memories, and short memories, and treacherous memories, that at length the plan was resigned in despair.

A substitute proposed by Lady Penelope was next considered. It was proposed to act what the Italians call a Comedy of Character; that is, not an exact drama, in which the actors deliver what is set down for them by the author; but one in which, the plot having been previously fixed upon, and a few striking scenes adjusted, the actors are expected to supply the dialogue extempore, or, as Petruchio says, from their mother wit. This is an amusement which affords much entertainment in Italy, particularly in the state of Venice, where the characters of their drama have been long since all previously fixed, and are handed down by tradition; and this species of drama, though rather belonging to the mask than the theatre, is distinguished by the name of Commedia dell' Arte.† But the shame-faced character of Britons is still more alien from a species of display, where there is a constant and extemporaneous demand for wit, or the sort of ready small-talk which supplies its place, than from the regular exhibitions of the drama, where the author, standing responsible for language and sentiment, leaves to the personators of the scenes only the trouble of finding enunciation and action.

But the ardent and active spirit of Lady Penelope, still

* At Kilruddery, the noble seat of Lord Meath, in the county of Wicklow, there is a situation for private theatrical exhibitions in the open air, planted out with the evergreens which arise there in the most luxuriant magnificence. It has a wild and romantic effect, reminding one of the scene in which Bottom rehearsed his pageant, with a green plot for a stage, and a hawthorn break for a tiring-room.

† See Mr. William Stewart Rose's very interesting Letters from the North of Italy, Vol. i. Letter XXX., where this curious subject is treated with the information and precision which distinguish that accomplished author.

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athirst after novelty, though baffled in her two first projects, brought forward a third, in which she was more successful. This was the proposal to combine a certain number, at least, of the guests, properly dressed for the occasion, as representing some well-known historical or dramatic characters, in a group, having reference to history, or to a scene of the drama. In this representation, which may be called playing a picture, action, even pantomimical action, was not expected; and all that was required of the performers was to throw themselves into such a group as might express a marked and striking point of an easily remembered scene, but where the actors are at a pause, and without either speech or motion. In this species of representation there was no tax, either on the invention or memory of those who might undertake parts; and, what recommended it still farther to the good company, there was no marked difference betwixt the hero and heroine of the group, and the less distinguished characters by whom they were attended on the stage; and every one who had confidence in a handsome shape and a becoming dress, might hope, though standing in not quite so broad and favourable a light as the principal personages, to draw, nevertheless, a considerable portion of attention and applause. This motion, therefore, that the company, or such of them as might choose to appear properly dressed for the occasion, should form themselves into one or more groups, which might be renewed and varied as often as they pleased, was hailed and accepted as a bright idea, which assigned to every one a share of the importance attached to its probable success.

Mowbray, on his side, promised to contrive some arrangement which should separate the actors in this mute drama from the spectators, and enable the former to vary the amusement by withdrawing themselves from the scene, and again appearing upon it under a different and new combination. This plan of exhibition, where fine clothes and affected attitudes supplied all draughts upon fancy or talent, was highly agreeable to most of the ladies present; and even Lady Binks, whose discontent seemed proof against every effort that could be proposed to soothe it, acquiesced in the project, with perfect indifference indeed, but with something less of sullenness than usual.

It now only remained to rummage the circulating library, for some piece of sufficient celebrity to command attention, and which should be at the same time suited to the execution

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of their project. Bell's British Theatre, Miller's Modern and Ancient Drama, and about twenty old volumes, in which stray tragedies and comedies were associated, like the passengers in a mail-coach, without the least attempt at selection or arrangement, were all examined in the course of their researches. But Lady Penelope declared loftily and decidedly for Shakespeare, as the author whose immortal works were fresh in every one's recollection. Shakespeare was therefore chosen, and from his works the Midsummer Night's Dream was selected, as the play which afforded the greatest variety of characters, and most scope of course for the intended representation. An active competition presently occurred among the greater part of the company, for such copies of the Midsummer Night's Dream, or the volume of Shakespeare containing it, as could be got in the neighbourhood; for, notwithstanding Lady Penelope's declaration, that every one who could read had Shakespeare's plays by heart, it appeared that such of his dramas as have not kept possession of the stage were very little known at St. Ronan's, save among those people who are emphatically called readers.

The adjustment of the parts was the first subject of consideration, so soon as those who intended to assume characters had refreshed their recollection on the subject of the piece. Theseus was unanimously assigned to Mowbray, the giver of the entertainment, and therefore justly entitled to represent the Duke of Athens. The costume of an Amazonian crest and plume, a tucked-up vest, and a tight buskin of sky-blue silk, buckled with diamonds, reconciled Lady Binks to the part of Hippolyta. The superior stature of Miss Mowbray to Lady Penelope made it necessary that the former should perform the part of Helena, and her ladyship rest contented with the shrewish character of Hermia. It was resolved to compliment the young Earl of Etherington with the part of Lysander, which, however, his Lordship declined, and, preferring comedy to tragedy, refused to appear in any other character than that of the magnanimous Bottom; and he gave them such a humorous specimen of his quality in that part, that all were delighted at once with his condescension in assuming, and his skill in performing, the presenter of Pyramus.

The part of Egeus was voted to Captain MacTurk, whose obstinacy in refusing to appear in any other than the full Highland garb, had nearly disconcerted the whole affair. At

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length this obstacle was got over, on the authority of Childe Harold, who remarks the similarity betwixt the Highland and Grecian costume;* and the company, dispensing with the difference of colour, voted the Captain's variegated kilt, of the MacTurk tartan, to be the kirtle of a Grecian mountaineer,—Egeus to be an Arnout, and the Captain to be Egeus. Chatterly and the painter, walking gentlemen by profession, agreed to walk through the parts of Demetrius and Lysander, the two Athenian lovers; and Mr. Winterblossom, loath and lazy, after many excuses, was bribed by Lady Penelope, with an antique, or supposed antique cameo, to play the part of Philostratus, master of the revels, provided his gout would permit him to remain so long upon the turf, which was to be their stage.

Muslin trowsers, adorned with spangles, a voluminous turban of silver gauze, and wings of the same, together with an embroidered slipper, converted at once Miss Digges into Oberon, the King of Shadows, whose sovereign gravity, however, was somewhat indifferently represented by the silly gaiety of Miss in her Teens, and the uncontrolled delight which she felt in her fine clothes. A younger sister represented Titania; and two or three subordinate elves were selected, among families attending the salutiferous fountain, who were easily persuaded to let their children figure in fine clothes at so juvenile an age, though they shook their head at Miss Digges and her pantaloons, and no less at the liberal display of Lady Binks's right leg, with which the Amazonian garb gratified the public of St. Ronan's.

Dr. Quackleben was applied to to play Wall, by the assistance of such a wooden horse, or screen, as clothes are usually dried upon; the old Attorney stood for Lion; and the other characters of Bottom's drama were easily found among the unnamed frequenters of the Spring. Dressed rehearsals, and so forth, went merrily on—all voted there was a play fitted.

But even the Doctor's eloquence could not press Mrs. Blower into the scheme, although she was particularly wanted to represent Thisbe.

* "The Arnaults, or Albanese," says Lord Byron, "struck me by their resemblance to the Highlanders of Scotland, in dress, figure, and manner of living. Their very mountains seem Caledonian, but a milder climate. The kilt, though white, the spare, active form, their dialect Celtic in the sound, and their hardy habits, all carried me back to Morven."—*Notes to the Second Chapter of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.*

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"Truth is," she replied, "I dinna greatly like stage-plays. John Blower, honest man, as sailors are aye for some spree or another, wad take me ance to see ane Mrs. Siddons—I thought we should hae been crushed to death before we gat in—a' my things riven aff my back, forby the four lily-white shillings that it cost us—and then in came three frightsome carlines wi' besoms, and they wad bewitch a sailor's wife—I was lang eneugh there—and out I wad be, and out John Blower gat me, but wi' nae sma' fight and fend.—My Lady Penelope Penfitter, and the great folk, may just take it as they like; but in my mind, Dr. Cacklehen, it's a mere blasphemy for folk to gar themselves look otherwise than their Maker made them; and then the changing the name which was given them at baptism, is, I think, an awful falling away from our vows; and though Thisby, which I take to be Greek for Tibbie, may be a very good name, yet Margaret was I christened, and Margaret will I die."

"You mistake the matter entirely, my dear Mrs. Blower," said the Doctor; "there is nothing serious intended—a mere *placebo*—just a divertisement to cheer the spirits, and assist the effect of the waters—cheerfulness is a great promoter of health."

"Dinna tell me o' health, Dr. Kittlepin!—Can it be for the puir body M'Durk's health to major about in the tartans like a tobacconist's sign in a frosty morning, wi' his poor wizened houghs as blue as a blawart?—weel I wot he is a humbling spectacle. Or can it gie ony body health or pleasure either to see your ainsell, Doctor, ganging about wi' a claise screen tied to your back, covered wi' paper, and painted like a stane and lime wa'?—I'll gang to see nane of their vanities, Dr. Kittlehen; and if there is nae other decent body to take care o' me, as I dinna like to sit a haill afternoon by mysell, I'll e'en gae doun to Mr. Sowerbrowst the maltster's—he is a pleasant sensible man, and a sponsible man in the world, and his sister's a very decent woman."

"Confound Sowerbrowst," thought the Doctor; "if I had guessed he was to come across me thus, he should not have got the better of his dyspepsy so early.—My dear Mrs. Blower," he continued, but aloud, "it is a foolish affair enough, I must confess; but every person of style and fashion at the Well has settled to attend this exhibition; there has been nothing else talked of for this month through the whole country, and it will be a year before it is forgotten. And I would have you con-

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sider how ill it will look, my dear Mrs. Blower, to stay away—nobody will believe you had a card—no, not though you were to hang it round your neck like a label round a vial of tincture, Mrs. Blower."

"If ye thought *that*, Doctor Kickherben," said the widow, alarmed at the idea of losing caste, "I wad e'en gang to the show, like other folk; sinful and shameful if it be, let them that make the sin bear the shame. But then I will put on nane of their Popish disguises—me that has lived in North Leith, baith wife and lass, for I shanna say how mony years, and has a character to keep up baith with saint and sinner.—And then, wha's to take care of me, since you are gaun to make a lime-and-stane wa' of yoursell, Doctor Kickinben?"

"My dear Mrs. Blower, if such is your determination, I will not make a wall of myself. Her ladyship must consider my profession—she must understand it is my function to look after my patients, in preference to all the stage-plays in this world—and to attend on a case like yours, Mrs. Blower, it is my duty to sacrifice, were it called for, the whole drama from Shakespeare to O'Keefe."

On hearing this magnanimous resolution, the widow's heart was greatly cheered; for, in fact, she might probably have considered the Doctor's perseverance in the plan, of which she had expressed such high disapprobation, as little less than a symptom of absolute defection from his allegiance. By an accommodation, therefore, which suited both parties, it was settled that the Doctor should attend his loving widow to Shaws Castle, without mask or mantle; and that the painted screen should be transferred from Quackleben's back to the broad shoulders of a briefless barrister, well qualified for the part of Wall, since the composition of his skull might have rivalled in solidity the mortar and stone of the most approved builder.

We must not pause to dilate upon the various labours of body and spirit which preceded the intervening space, betwixt the settlement of this gay scheme, and the time appointed to carry it into execution. We will not attempt to describe how the wealthy, by letter and by commissioners, urged their researches through the stores of the Gallery of Fashion for specimens of Oriental finery—how they that were scant of diamonds supplied their place with paste and Bristol stones—how the country dealers were driven out of patience by the demand for goods of

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which they had never before heard the name—and, lastly, how the busy fingers of the more economical damsels twisted handkerchiefs into turbans, and converted petticoats into pantaloons, shaped and sewed, cut and clipped, and spoiled many a decent gown and petticoat, to produce something like a Grecian habit. Who can describe the wonders wrought by active needles and scissors, aided by thimbles and thread, upon silver gauze, and sprigged muslin? or who can show how, if the fair nymphs of the Spring did not entirely succeed in attaining the desired resemblance to heathen Greeks, they at least contrived to get rid of all similitude to sober Christians?

Neither is it necessary to dwell upon the various schemes of conveyance which were resorted to, in order to transfer the *beau monde* of the Spa to the scene of revelry at Shaws Castle. These were as various as the fortunes and pretensions of the owners; from the lordly curricle, with its outriders, to the humble taxed cart, nay, untaxed cart, which conveyed the personages of lesser rank. For the latter, indeed, the two post-chaises at the Inn seemed converted into hourly stages, so often did they come and go between the Hotel and the Castle—a glad day for the postilions, and a day of martyrdom for the poor post-horses; so seldom is it that every department of any society, however constituted, can be injured or benefited by the same occurrence.

Such, indeed, was the penury of vehicular conveyance, that applications were made in manner most humble, even to Meg Dods herself, entreating she would permit her old whiskey to *ply* (for such might have been the phrase) at St. Ronan's Well, for that day only, and that upon good cause shown. But not for sordid lucre would the undaunted spirit of Meg compound her feud with her neighbours of the detested Well. "Her carriage," she briefly replied, "was engaged for her ain guest and the minister, and deil anither body's fit should gang intill't. Let every herring hing by its ain head." And, accordingly, at the duly appointed hour, creaked forth the leathern convenience, in which, carefully screened by the curtain from the gaze of the fry of the village, sat Nabob Touchwood, in the costume of an Indian merchant, or Shroff, as they are termed. The clergyman would not, perhaps, have been so punctual, had not a set of notes and messages from his friend at the Cleikum, ever following each other as thick as the papers which decorate the

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tail of a school-boy's kite, kept him so continually on the alert from daybreak till noon, that Mr. Touchwood found him completely dressed; and the whiskey was only delayed for about ten minutes before the door of the manse, a space employed by Mr. Cargill in searching for his spectacles, which at last were happily discovered upon his own nose.

At length, seated by the side of his new friend, Mr. Cargill arrived safe at Shaws Castle, the gate of which mansion was surrounded by a screaming group of children, so extravagantly delighted at seeing the strange figures to whom each successive carriage gave birth, that even the stern brow and well-known voice of Johnny Tirlsneck, the beadle, though stationed in the court on express purpose, was not equal to the task of controlling them. These noisy intruders, however, who, it was believed, were somewhat favoured by Clara Mowbray, were excluded from the court which opened before the house, by a couple of grooms or helpers armed with their whips, and could only salute, with their shrill and wondering hailing, the various personages as they passed down a short avenue leading from the exterior gate.

The Cleikum nabob and the minister were greeted with shouts not the least clamorous; which the former merited by the ease with which he wore the white turban, and the latter, by the infrequency of his appearance in public; and both, by the singular association of a decent clergyman of the Church of Scotland, in a dress more old-fashioned than could now be produced in the General Assembly, walking arm-in-arm, and seemingly in the most familiar terms, with a Parsee merchant. They stopped a moment at the gate of the courtyard to admire the front of the old mansion, which had been disturbed with so unusual a scene of gaiety.

Shaws Castle, though so named, presented no appearance of defence; and the present edifice had never been designed for more than the accommodation of a peaceful family, having a low, heavy front, loaded with some of that meretricious ornament, which, uniting, or rather confounding, the Gothic and Grecian architecture, was much used during the reigns of James VI. of Scotland, and his unfortunate son. The court formed a small square, two sides of which were occupied by such buildings as were required for the family, and the third by the stables, the only part to which much attention had been paid, the present

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Mr. Mowbray having put them into excellent order. The fourth side of the square was shut up by a screen wall, through which a door opened to the avenue; the whole being a kind of structure which may be still found on those old Scottish properties, where a rage to render their place *Parkish*, as was at one time the prevailing phrase, has not induced the owners to pull down the venerable and sheltering appendages with which their wiser fathers had screened their mansion, and to lay the whole open to the keen north-east; much after the fashion of a spinster of fifty, who chills herself to gratify the public by an exposure of her thin red elbows, and shrivelled neck and bosom.

A double door, thrown hospitably open on the present occasion, admitted the company into a dark and low hall, where Mowbray himself, wearing the under dress of Theseus, but not having yet assumed his ducal cap and robes, stood to receive his guests with due courtesy, and to indicate to each the road allotted to him. Those who were to take a share in the representation of the morning were conducted to an old saloon, destined for a green-room, and which communicated with a series of apartments on the right, hastily fitted with accommodations for arranging and completing their toilet; while others, who took no part in the intended drama, were ushered to the left, into a large, unfurnished, and long disused dining parlour, where a sashed door opened into the gardens, crossed with yew and holly hedges, still trimmed and clipped by the old grey-headed gardener, upon those principles which a Dutchman thought worthy of commemorating in a didactic poem upon the *Ars Topiaria.*

A little wilderness, surrounding a beautiful piece of the smoothest turf, and itself bounded by such high hedges as we have described, had been selected as the stage most proper for the exhibition of the intended dramatic picture. It afforded many facilities; for a rising bank exactly in front was accommodated with seats for the spectators, who had a complete view of the sylvan theatre, the bushes and shrubs having been cleared away, and the place supplied with a temporary screen, which, being withdrawn by the domestics appointed for that purpose, was to serve for the rising of the curtain. A covered trellis, which passed through another part of the garden, and terminated with a private door opening from the right wing of the building, seemed as if it had been planted on purpose for the

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proposed exhibition, as it served to give the personages of the drama a convenient and secret access from the green-room to the place of representation. Indeed, the dramatis personæ, at least those who adopted the management of the matter, were induced, by so much convenience, to extend, in some measure, their original plan; and, instead of one group, as had been at first proposed, they now found themselves able to exhibit to the good company a succession of three or four, selected and arranged from different parts of the drama; thus giving some duration, as well as some variety, to the entertainment, besides the advantage of separating and contrasting the tragic and the comic scenes.

After wandering about amongst the gardens, which contained little to interest any one, and endeavouring to recognise some characters, who, accommodating themselves to the humours of the day, had ventured to appear in the various disguises of ballad-singers, pedlars, shepherds, Highlanders, and so forth, the company began to draw together towards the spot where the seats prepared for them, and the screen drawn in front of the bosky stage, induced them to assemble, and excited expectation, especially as a scroll in front of the esplanade set forth, in the words of the play, "This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn brake our tiring-house, and we will do it in action." A delay of about ten minutes began to excite some suppressed murmurs of impatience among the audience, when the touch of Gow's fiddle suddenly burst from a neighbouring hedge, behind which he had established his little orchestra. All were of course silent,

"As through his dear strathspeys he bore with Highland rage."

And when he changed his strain to an adagio, and suffered his music to die away in the plaintive notes of Roslin Castle, the echoes of the old walls were, after a long slumber, awakened by that enthusiastic burst of applause, with which the Scots usually received and rewarded their country's gifted minstrel.

"He is his father's own son," said Touchwood to the clergyman, for both had gotten seats near about the centre of the place of audience. "It is many a long year since I listened to old Neil at Inver, and, to say truth, spent a night with him over pancakes and Athole brose; and I never expected to hear his match again in my lifetime. But stop—the curtain rises."

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The screen was indeed withdrawn, and displayed Hermia, Helena, and their lovers, in attitudes corresponding to the scene of confusion occasioned by the error of Puck.

Messrs. Chatterly and the Painter played their parts neither better nor worse than amateur actors in general; and the best that could be said of them was, that they seemed more than half ashamed of their exotic dresses, and of the public gaze.

But against this untimely weakness Lady Penelope was guarded, by the strong shield of self-conceit. She minced, ambled, and, notwithstanding the slight appearance of her person, and the depredations which time had made on a countenance that had never been very much distinguished for beauty, seemed desirous to top the part of the beautiful daughter of Egeus. The sullenness which was proper to the character of Hermia, was much augmented by the discovery that Miss Mowbray was so much better dressed than herself,—a discovery which she had but recently made, as that young lady had not attended on the regular rehearsals at the Well, but once, and then without her stage habit. Her ladyship, however, did not permit this painful sense of inferiority, where she had expected triumph, so far to prevail over her desire of shining, as to interrupt materially the manner in which she had settled to represent her portion of the scene. The nature of the exhibition precluded much action, but Lady Penelope made amends by such a succession of grimaces, as might rival, in variety at least, the singular display which Garrick used to call "going his rounds." She twisted her poor features into looks of most desperate love towards Lysander; into those of wonder and offended pride, when she turned them upon Demetrius; and finally settled them on Helena, with the happiest possible imitation of an incensed rival, who feels the impossibility of relieving her swollen heart by tears alone, and is just about to have recourse to her nails.

No contrast could be stronger in looks, demeanour, and figure, than that between Hermia and Helena. In the latter character, the beautiful form and foreign dress of Miss Mowbray attracted all eyes. She kept her place on the stage, as a sentinel does that which his charge assigns him; for she had previously told her brother, that though she consented, at his importunity, to make part of the exhibition, it was as a piece of the scene, not as an actor, and accordingly a painted figure could scarce be more immovable. The expression of her coun-

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tenance seemed to be that of deep sorrow and perplexity, belonging to her part, over which wandered at times an air of irony or ridicule, as if she were secretly scorning the whole exhibition, and even herself for condescending to become part of it. Above all, a sense of bashfulness had cast upon her cheek a colour, which, though sufficiently slight, was more than her countenance was used to display; and when the spectators beheld, in the splendour and grace of a rich Oriental dress, her whom they had hitherto been accustomed to see attired only in the most careless manner, they felt the additional charms of surprise and contrast; so that the bursts of applause which were volleyed towards the stage, might be said to be addressed to her alone, and to vie in sincerity with those which have been forced from an audience by the most accomplished performer.

"Oh, that puir Lady Penelope!" said honest Mrs. Blower, who, when her scruples against the exhibition were once got over, began to look upon it with particular interest,—"I am really sorry for her puir face, for she gars it work like the sails of John Blower's vesshel in a stiff breeze.—Oh, Doctor Cacklehen, dinna ye think she wad need, if it were possible, to rin ower her face wi' a gusing iron, just to take the wrunkles out o't?"

"Hush, hush! my good dear Mrs. Blower," said the Doctor; "Lady Penelope is a woman of quality, and my patient, and such people always act charmingly—you must understand there is no hissing at a private theatre—Hem!"

"Ye may say what ye like, Doctor, but there is nae fule like an auld fule—To be sure, if she was as young and beautiful as Miss Mowbray—hegh me, and I didna use to think her sae bonny neither—but dress—dress makes an unco difference—That shawl o' hers—I daur say the like o't was ne'er seen in braid Scotland—It will be real Indian, I'se warrant."

"Real Indian!" said Mr. Touchwood, in an accent of disdain, which rather disturbed Mrs. Blower's equanimity,—"why, what do you suppose it should be, madam?"

"I dinna ken, sir," said she, edging somewhat nearer the Doctor, not being altogether pleased, as she afterwards allowed, with the outlandish appearance and sharp tone of the traveller; then pulling her own drapery round her shoulders, she added, courageously, "There are braw shawls made at Paisley, that ye will scarce ken frae foreign."

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"Not know Paisley shawls from Indian, madam!" said Touchwood; "why, a blind man could tell by the slightest touch of his little finger. Yon shawl, now, is the handsomest I have seen in Britain—and at this distance I can tell it to be a real *Tozie*."

"Cozie may she weel be that wears it," said Mrs. Blower. "I declare, now I look on't again, it's a perfect beauty."

"It is called Tozie, ma'am, not cozie," continued the traveller; "the Shroffs at Surat told me, in 1801, that it is made out of the inner coat of a goat."

"Of a sheep, sir, I am thinking ye mean, for goats has nae woo'."

"Not much of it, indeed, madam; but you are to understand they use only the inmost coat; and then their dyes—that Tozie now will keep its colour while there is a rag of it left—men bequeath them in legacies to their grandchildren."

"And a very bonny colour it is," said the dame; "something like a mouse's back, only a thought redder—I wonder what they ca' that colour."

"The colour is much admired, madam," said Touchwood, who was now on a favourite topic; "the Mussulmans say the colour is betwixt that of an elephant and the breast of the *faughta*."

"In troth, I am as wise as I was," said Mrs. Blower.

"The *faughta*, madam, so called by the Moors (for the Hindoos call it *hollah*), is a sort of pigeon, held sacred among the Moslem of India, because they think it dyed its breast in the blood of Ali.—But I see they are closing the scene.—Mr. Cargill, are you composing your sermon, my good friend, or what can you be thinking of?"

Mr. Cargill had, during the whole scene, remained with his eyes fixed, in intent and anxious, although almost unconscious gaze, upon Clara Mowbray; and when the voice of his companion startled him out of his reverie, he exclaimed, "Most lovely—most unhappy—yes—I must and will see her!"

"See her?" replied Touchwood, too much accustomed to his friend's singularities to look for much reason or connection in anything he said or did; "Why, you shall see her and talk to her too, if that will give you pleasure.—They say now," he continued, lowering his voice to a whisper, "that this Mowbray is ruined. I see nothing like it, since he can dress out his

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sister like a Begum. Did you ever see such a splendid shawl?"

"Dearly purchased splendour," said Mr. Cargill, with a deep sigh; "I wish that the price be yet fully paid!"

"Very likely not," said the traveller; "very likely it's gone to the book; and for the price, I have known a thousand rupees given for such a shawl in the country.—But hush, hush, we are to have another tune from Nathaniel—faith, and they are withdrawing the screen—Well, they have some mercy—they do not let us wait long between the acts of their follies at least—I love a quick and rattling fire in these vanities—Folly walking a funeral pace, and clinking her bells to the time of a passing knell, makes sad work indeed."

A strain of music, beginning slowly, and terminating in a light and wild allegro, introduced on the stage those delightful creatures of the richest imagination that ever teemed with wonders, the Oberon and Titania of Shakespeare. The pigmy majesty of the captain of the fairy band had no inapt representative in Miss Digges, whose modesty was not so great an intruder as to prevent her desire to present him in all his dignity, and she moved, conscious of the graceful turn of a pretty ankle, which, encircled with a string of pearls, and clothed in flesh-coloured silk, of the most cobweb texture, rose above the crimson sandal. Her jewelled tiara, too, gave dignity to the frown with which the offended King of Shadows greeted his consort, as each entered upon the scene at the head of their several attendants.

The restlessness of the children had been duly considered; and therefore, their part of the exhibition had been contrived to represent dumb show, rather than a stationary picture. The little Queen of Elves was not inferior in action to her moody lord, and repaid, with a look of female impatience and scorn, the haughty air which seemed to express his sullen greeting,

"Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania."

The other children were, as usual, some clever and forward, some loutish and awkward enough; but the gambols of childhood are sure to receive applause, paid, perhaps, with a mixture of pity and envy, by those in advanced life; and besides, there were in the company several fond papas and mammas, whose clamorous approbation, though given apparently to the whole

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performers, was especially dedicated in their hearts to their own little Jackies and Marias,—for *Mary*, though the prettiest and most classical of Scottish names, is now unknown in the land. The elves, therefore, played their frolics, danced a measure, and vanished with good approbation.

The anti-mask, as it may be called, of Bottom, and his company of actors, next appeared on the stage, and a thunder of applause received the young Earl, who had, with infinite taste and dexterity, transformed himself into the similitude of an Athenian clown; observing the Grecian costume, yet so judiciously discriminated from the dress of the higher characters, as at once to fix the character of a thick-skinned mechanic on the wearer. Touchwood, in particular, was loud in his approbation, from which the correctness of the costume must be inferred; for that honest gentleman, like many other critics, was indeed not very much distinguished for good taste, but had a capital memory for petty matters of fact; and while the most impressive look or gesture of an actor might have failed to interest him, would have censured most severely the fashion of a sleeve, or the colour of a shoe-tie.

But the Earl of Etherington's merits were not confined to his external appearance; for, had his better fortunes failed him, his deserts, like those of Hamlet, might have got him a fellowship in a cry of players. He presented, though in dumb show, the pragmatic conceit of Bottom, to the infinite amusement of all present, especially of those who were well acquainted with the original; and when he was "translated" by Puck, he bore the ass's head, his newly-acquired dignity, with an appearance of conscious greatness, which made the metamorphosis, though in itself sufficiently farcical, irresistibly comic. He afterwards displayed the same humour in his frolics with the fairies, and the intercourse which he held with Messrs. Cobweb, Mustard-seed, Pease-blossom, and the rest of Titania's cavaliers, who lost all command of their countenances at the gravity with which he invited them to afford him the luxury of scratching his hairy snout. Mowbray had also found a fitting representative for Puck in a queer-looking, small-eyed boy of the Aultoun of St. Ronan's, with large ears projecting from his head like turrets from a Gothic building. This exotic animal personified the merry and mocking spirit of Hobgoblin with considerable power, so that the group bore some resemblance to the well-known and

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exquisite delineation of Puck by Sir Joshua, in the select collection of the Bard of Memory. It was, however, the ruin of the St. Ronan's Robin Goodfellow, who did no good afterwards,—"gaed an ill gate," as Meg Dods said, and "took on" with a party of strolling players.

The entertainment closed with a grand parade of all the characters that had appeared, during which Mowbray concluded that the young lord himself, unremarked, might have time enough to examine the outward form, at least, of his sister Clara, whom, in the pride of his heart, he could not help considering superior in beauty, dressed as she now was, with every advantage of art, even to the brilliant Amazon, Lady Binks. It is true, Mowbray was not a man to give preference to the intellectual expression of poor Clara's features over the sultana-like beauty of the haughty dame, which promised to an admirer all the vicissitudes that can be expressed by a countenance lovely in every change, and changing as often as an ardent and impetuous disposition, unused to constraint, and despising admonition, should please to dictate. Yet, to do him justice, though his preference was perhaps dictated more by fraternal partiality than by purity of taste, he certainly, on the present occasion, felt the full extent of Clara's superiority; and there was a proud smile on his lip, as, at the conclusion of the divertisement, he asked the Earl how he had been pleased. The rest of the performers had separated, and the young lord remained on the stage, employed in disembarrassing himself of his awkward visor, when Mowbray put this question, to which, though general in terms, he naturally gave a particular meaning.

"I could wear my ass's head for ever," he said, "on condition my eyes were to be so delightfully employed as they have been during the last scene.—Mowbray, your sister is an angel!"

"Have a care that that head-piece of yours has not perverted your taste, my lord," said Mowbray. "But why did you wear that disguise on your last appearance? You should, I think, have been uncovered."

"I am ashamed to answer you," said the Earl; "but truth is, first impressions are of consequence, and I thought I might do as wisely not to appear before your sister, for the first time, in the character of Bully Bottom."

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"Then you change your dress, my lord, for dinner, if we call our luncheon by that name?" said Mowbray.

"I am going to my room this instant for that very purpose," replied the Earl.

"And I," said Mowbray, "must step in front and dismiss the audience; for I see they are sitting gaping there, waiting for another scene."

They parted upon this; and Mowbray, as Duke Theseus, stepped before the screen, and announcing the conclusion of the dramatic pictures which they had had the honour to present before the worshipful company, thanked the spectators for the very favourable reception which they had afforded; and intimated to them, that if they could amuse themselves by strolling for an hour among the gardens, a bell would summon to the house at the expiry of that time, when some refreshments would wait their acceptance. This annunciation was received with the applause due to the *Amphitryon où l'on dine;* and the guests, arising from before the temporary theatre, dispersed through the gardens, which were of some extent, to seek for or create amusement to themselves. The music greatly aided them in this last purpose, and it was not long ere a dozen of couples and upwards were "tripping it on the light fantastic toe" (I love a phrase that is not hackneyed), to the tune of Monymusk.

Others strolled through the grounds, meeting some quaint disguise at the end of every verdant alley, and communicating to others the surprise and amusement which they themselves were receiving. The scene, from the variety of dresses, the freedom which it gave to the display of humour amongst such as possessed any, and the general disposition to give and receive pleasure, rendered the little masquerade more entertaining than others of the kind for which more ample and magnificent preparations have been made. There was also a singular and pleasing contrast between the fantastic figures who wandered through the gardens, and the quiet scene itself, to which the old clipt hedges, the formal distribution of the ground, and the antiquated appearance of one or two fountains and artificial cascades, in which the naiads had been for the nonce compelled to resume their ancient frolics, gave an appearance of unusual simplicity and seclusion, and which seemed rather to belong to the last than to the present generation.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST.

PERPLEXITIES.

For revels, dances, masks, and merry hours,
Fore-run fair Love, strewing his way with flowers.
LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

Worthies, away—the scene begins to cloud.
IBIDEM.

MR. TOUCHWOOD and his inseparable friend, Mr. Cargill, wandered on amidst the gay groups we have described, the former censuring with great scorn the frequent attempts which he observed towards an imitation of the costume of the East, and appealing with self-complacence to his own superior representation, as he greeted in Moorish and in Persic the several turban'd figures who passed his way; while the clergyman, whose mind seemed to labour with some weighty and important project, looked in every direction for the fair representative of Helena, but in vain. At length he caught a glimpse of the memorable shawl, which had drawn forth so learned a discussion from his companion; and starting from Touchwood's side with a degree of anxious alertness totally foreign to his usual habits, he endeavoured to join the person by whom it was worn.

"By the Lord," said his companion, "the Doctor is beside himself!—the parson is mad!—the divine is out of his senses, that is clear; and how the devil can he, who scarce can find his road from the Cleikum to his own manse, venture himself unprotected into such a scene of confusion?—he might as well pretend to cross the Atlantic without a pilot—I must push off in chase of him, lest worse come of it."

But the traveller was prevented from executing his friendly purpose by a sort of crowd which came rushing down the alley, the centre of which was occupied by Captain MacTurk, in the very act of bullying two pseudo Highlanders, for having presumed to lay aside their breeches before they had acquired the Gaelic language. The sounds of contempt and insult with which the genuine Celt was overwhelming the unfortunate impostors, were not, indeed, intelligible otherwise than from the

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tone and manner of the speaker; but these intimated so much displeasure, that the plaided forms whose unadvised choice of a disguise had provoked it—two raw lads from a certain great manufacturing town—heartily repented their temerity, and were in the act of seeking for the speediest exit from the gardens; rather choosing to resign their share of the dinner, than to abide the farther consequences that might follow from the displeasure of this Highland Termagant.

Touchwood had scarcely extricated himself from this impediment, and again commenced his researches after the clergyman, when his course was once more interrupted by a sort of press-gang, headed by Sir Bingo Binks, who, in order to play his character of a drunken boatswain to the life, seemed certainly drunk enough, however little of a seaman. His cheer sounded more like a view-hollo than a hail, when, with a volley of such oaths as would have blown a whole fleet of the Bethel Union out of the water, he ordered Touchwood "to come under his lee, and be d—d; for, smash his old timbers, he must go to sea again, for as weather-beaten a hulk as he was."

Touchwood answered instantly, "To sea with all my heart, but not with a land-lubber for commander.—Hark ye, brother, do you know how much of a horse's furniture belongs to a ship?"

"Come, none of your quizzing, my old buck," said Sir Bingo —"What the devil has a ship to do with horse's furniture?—Do you think we belong to the horse-marines?—ha! ha! I think you're matched, brother."

"Why, you son of a fresh-water gudgeon," replied the traveller, "that never in your life sailed farther than the Isle of Dogs, do you pretend to play a sailor, and not know the bridle of the bow-line, and the saddle of the boltsprit, and the bit for the cable, and the girth to hoist the rigging, and the whip to serve for small tackle?—There is a trick for you to find out an Abramman, and save sixpence when he begs of you as a disbanded seaman.—Get along with you! or the constable shall be charged with the whole press-gang to man the workhouse."

A general laugh arose at the detection of the swaggering boatswain; and all that the Baronet had for it was to sneak off, saying, "D—n the old quiz, who the devil thought to have heard so much slang from an old muslin nightcap?"

Touchwood, being now an object of some attention, was followed by two or three stragglers, whom he endeavoured to

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rid himself of the best way he could, testifying an impatience a little inconsistent with the decorum of his Oriental demeanour, but which arose from his desire to rejoin his companion, and some apprehension of inconvenience which he feared Cargill might sustain during his absence. For, being in fact as good-natured a man as any in the world, Mr. Touchwood was at the same time one of the most conceited, and was very apt to suppose, that his presence, advice, and assistance, were of the most indispensable consequence to those with whom he lived; and that not only on great emergencies, but even in the most ordinary occurrences of life.

Meantime, Mr. Cargill, whom he sought in vain, was, on his part, anxiously keeping in sight of the beautiful Indian shawl, which served as a flag to announce to him the vessel which he held in chase. At length he approached so close as to say, in an anxious whisper, "Miss Mowbray—Miss Mowbray—I must speak with you."

"And what would you have with Miss Mowbray?" said the fair wearer of the beautiful shawl, but without turning round her head.

"I have a secret—an important secret, of which to make you aware; but it is not for this place.—Do not turn from me! —Your happiness in this, and perhaps in the next life, depends on your listening to me."

The lady led the way, as if to give him an opportunity of speaking with her more privately, to one of those old-fashioned and deeply-embowered recesses, which are commonly found in such gardens as that of Shaws Castle; and, with her shawl wrapped around her head, so as in some degree to conceal her features, she stood before Mr. Cargill in the doubtful light and shadow of a huge platanus-tree, which formed the canopy of the arbour, and seemed to await the communication he had promised.

"Report says," said the clergyman, speaking in an eager and hurried manner, yet with a low voice, and like one desirous of being heard by her whom he addressed, and by no one else,—"Report says that you are about to be married."

"And is report kind enough to say to whom?" answered the lady, with a tone of indifference which seemed to astound her interrogator.

"Young lady," he answered, with a solemn voice, "had this levity been sworn to me, I could never have believed it! Have

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you forgot the circumstances in which you stand?—Have you forgotten that my promise of secrecy, sinful perhaps even in that degree, was but a conditional promise?—or did you think that a being so sequestered as I am was already dead to the world, even while he was walking upon its surface?—Know, young lady, that I am indeed dead to the pleasures and the ordinary business of life, but I am even therefore the more alive to its duties."

"Upon my honour, sir, unless you are pleased to be more explicit, it is impossible for me either to answer or understand you," said the lady; "you speak too seriously for a masquerade pleasantry, and yet not clearly enough to make your earnest comprehensible."

"Is this sullenness, Miss Mowbray?" said the clergyman, with increased animation; "Is it levity?—Or is it alienation of mind?—Even after a fever of the brain, we retain a recollection of the causes of our illness.—Come, you must and do understand me, when I say that I will not consent to your committing a great crime to attain temporal wealth and rank, no, not to make you an empress. My path is a clear one; and should I hear a whisper breathed of your alliance with this Earl, or whatever he may be, rely upon it, that I will withdraw the veil, and make your brother, your bridegroom, and the whole world, acquainted with the situation in which you stand, and the impossibility of your forming the alliance which you propose to yourself, I am compelled to say, against the laws of God and man."

"But, sir—sir," answered the lady, rather eagerly than anxiously, "you have not yet told me what business you have with my marriage, or what arguments you can bring against it."

"Madam," replied Mr. Cargill, "in your present state of mind, and in such a scene as this, I cannot enter upon a topic for which the season is unfit, and you, I am sorry to say, are totally unprepared. It is enough that you know the grounds on which you stand. At a fitter opportunity, I will, as it is my duty, lay before you the enormity of what you are said to have meditated, with the freedom which becomes one, who, however humble, is appointed to explain to his fellow-creatures the laws of his Maker. In the meantime, I am not afraid that you will take any hasty step, after such a warning as this."

So saying, he turned from the lady with that dignity which

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a conscious discharge of duty confers, yet, at the same time, with a sense of deep pain, inflicted by the careless levity of her whom he addressed. She did not any longer attempt to detain him, but made her escape from the arbour by one alley, as she heard voices which seemed to approach it from another. The clergyman, who took the opposite direction, met in full encounter a whispering and tittering pair, who seemed, at his sudden appearance, to check their tone of familiarity, and assume an appearance of greater distance towards each other. The lady was no other than the fair Queen of the Amazons, who seemed to have adopted the recent partiality of Titania towards Bully Bottom, being in conference such and so close as we have described, with the late representative of the Athenian weaver, whose recent visit to his chamber had metamorphosed into the more gallant disguise of an ancient Spanish cavalier. He now appeared with cloak and drooping plume, sword, poniard, and guitar, richly dressed at all points, as for a serenade beneath his mistress's window; a silk mask at the breast of his embroidered doublet hung ready to be assumed in case of intrusion, as an appropriate part of the national dress.

It sometimes happened to Mr. Cargill, as we believe it may chance to other men much subject to absence of mind, that, contrary to their wont, and much after the manner of a sunbeam suddenly piercing a deep mist, and illuminating one particular object in the landscape, some sudden recollection rushes upon them, and seems to compel them to act under it, as under the influence of complete certainty and conviction. Mr. Cargill had no sooner set eyes on the Spanish Cavalier, in whom he neither knew the Earl of Etherington, nor recognised Bully Bottom, than with hasty motion he seized on his reluctant hand, and exclaimed, with a mixture of eagerness and solemnity, "I rejoice to see you!—Heaven has sent you here in its own good time."

"I thank you, sir," replied Lord Etherington, very coldly; "I believe you have the joy of the meeting entirely on your side, as I cannot remember having seen you before."

"Is not your name Bulmer?" said the clergyman. "I—I know—I am sometimes apt to make mistakes—But I am sure your name is Bulmer?"

"Not that ever I or my godfathers heard of—my name was Bottom half-an-hour ago—perhaps that makes the confusion,"

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answered the Earl, with very cold and distant politeness;—"Permit me to pass, sir, that I may attend the lady."

"Quite unnecessary," answered Lady Binks; "I leave you to adjust your mutual recollections with your new old friend, my lord—he seems to have something to say." So saying, the lady walked on, not perhaps sorry of an opportunity to show apparent indifference for his lordship's society, in the presence of one who had surprised them in what might seem a moment of exuberant intimacy.

"You detain me, sir," said the Earl of Etherington to Mr. Cargill, who, bewildered and uncertain, still kept himself placed so directly before the young nobleman, as to make it impossible for him to pass, without absolutely pushing him to one side. "I must really attend the lady," he added, making another effort to walk on.

"Young man," said Mr. Cargill, "you cannot disguise yourself from me. I am sure—my mind assures me, that you are that very Bulmer whom Heaven has sent here to prevent crime."

"And you," said Lord Etherington, "whom my mind assures me I never saw in my life, are sent hither by the devil, I think, to create confusion."

"I beg pardon, sir," said the clergyman, staggered by the calm and pertinacious denial of the Earl—"I beg pardon if I am in a mistake—that is, if I am *really* in a mistake—but I am not—I am sure I am not—That look—that smile—I am NOT mistaken. You *are* Valentine Bulmer—the very Valentine Bulmer whom I—but I will not make your private affairs any part of this exposition—enough, you *are* Valentine Bulmer."

"Valentine?—Valentine?" answered Lord Etherington, impatiently—"I am neither Valentine nor Orson—I wish you good-morning, sir."

"Stay, sir, stay, I charge you," said the clergyman; "if you are unwilling to be known yourself, it may be because you have forgotten who I am—Let me name myself as the Reverend Josiah Cargill, minister of St. Ronan's."

"If you bear a character so venerable, sir," replied the young nobleman,—"in which, however, I am not in the least interested, —I think when you make your morning draught a little too potent, it might be as well for you to stay at home and sleep it off, before coming into company."

"In the name of Heaven, young gentleman," said Mr. Cargill,

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"lay aside this untimely and unseemly jesting! and tell me if you be not—as I cannot but still believe you to be—that same youth, who, seven years since, left in my deposit a solemn secret, which, if I should unfold to the wrong person, woe would be my own heart, and evil the consequences which might ensue!"

"You are very pressing with me, sir," said the Earl; "and, in exchange, I will be equally frank with you.—I am not the man whom you mistake me for, and you may go seek him where you will—It will be still more lucky for you if you chance to find your own wits in the course of your researches; for I must tell you plainly, I think they are gone somewhat astray." So saying, with a gesture expressive of a determined purpose to pass on, Mr. Cargill had no alternative but to make way, and suffer him to proceed.

The worthy clergyman stood as if rooted to the ground, and, with his usual habit of thinking aloud, exclaimed to himself, "My fancy has played me many a bewildering trick, but this is the most extraordinary of them all!—What can this young man think of me? It must have been my conversation with that unhappy young lady that has made such an impression upon me as to deceive my very eye-sight, and causes me to connect with her history the face of the next person that I met —What *must* the stranger think of me?"

"Why, what every one thinks of thee that knows thee, prophet," said the friendly voice of Touchwood, accompanying his speech with an awakening slap on the clergyman's shoulder; "and that is, that thou art an unfortunate philosopher of Laputa, who has lost his flapper in the throng.—Come along—having me once more by your side, you need fear nothing. Why, now I look at you closer, you look as if you had seen a basilisk—not that there is any such thing, otherwise I must have seen it myself, in the course of my travels—but you seem pale and frightened—What the devil is the matter?"

"Nothing," answered the clergyman, "except that I have even this very moment made an egregious fool of myself."

"Pooh, pooh, that is nothing to sigh over, prophet.—Every man does so at least twice in the four-and-twenty hours," said Touchwood.

"But I had nearly betrayed to a stranger a secret deeply concerning the honour of an ancient family."

"That was wrong, Doctor," said Touchwood; "take care of

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that in future; and, indeed, I would advise you not to speak even to your beadle, Johnny Tirlsneck, until you have assured yourself by at least three pertinent questions and answers, that you have the said Johnny corporeally and substantially in presence before you, and that your fancy has not invested some stranger with honest Johnny's singed periwig and threadbare brown joseph—Come along—come along."

So saying, he hurried forward the perplexed clergyman, who in vain made all the excuses he could think of in order to effect his escape from the scene of gaiety, in which he was so unexpectedly involved. He pleaded headache; and his friend assured him that a mouthful of food, and a glass of wine, would mend it. He stated he had business; and Touchwood replied that he could have none but composing his next sermon, and reminded him that it was two days till Sunday. At length, Mr. Cargill confessed that he had some reluctance again to see the stranger, on whom he had endeavoured with such pertinacity to fix an acquaintance, which he was now well assured existed only in his own imagination. The traveller treated his scruples with scorn, and said, that guests meeting in this general manner, had no more to do with each other than if they were assembled in a caravansary.

"So that you need not say a word to him in the way of apology or otherwise—or, what will be still better, I, who have seen so much of the world, will make the pretty speech for you." As they spoke, he dragged the divine towards the house, where they were now summoned by the appointed signal, and where the company were assembling in the old saloon already noticed, previous to passing into the dining-room, where the refreshments were prepared. "Now, Doctor," continued the busy friend of Mr. Cargill, "let us see which of all these people has been the subject of your blunder. Is it yon animal of a Highlandman?—or the impertinent brute that wants to be thought a boatswain? or which of them all is it?—Ay, here they come, two and two, Newgate fashion—the young Lord of the Manor with old Lady Penelope—does he set up for Ulysses, I wonder?—The Earl of Etherington with Lady Bingo—methinks it should have been with Miss Mowbray."

"The Earl of what did you say?" quoth the clergyman, anxiously. "How is it you titled that young man in the Spanish dress?"

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"Oho!" said the traveller; "what, I have discovered the goblin that has scared you?—Come along—come along—I will make you acquainted with him." So saying, he dragged him towards Lord Etherington; and before the divine could make his negative intelligible, the ceremony of introduction had taken place. "My Lord Etherington, allow me to present Mr. Cargill, minister of this parish—a learned gentleman, whose head is often in the Holy Land, when his person seems present among his friends. He suffers extremely, my lord, under the sense of mistaking your lordship for the Lord knows who; but when you are acquainted with him, you will find that he can make a hundred stranger mistakes than that, so we hope that your lordship will take no prejudice or offence."

"There can be no offence taken where no offence is intended," said Lord Etherington with much urbanity. "It is I who ought to beg the reverend gentleman's pardon, for hurrying from him without allowing him to make a complete *éclaircissement.* I beg his pardon for an abruptness which the place and the time—for I was immediately engaged in a lady's service—rendered unavoidable."

Mr. Cargill gazed on the young nobleman as he pronounced these words, with the easy indifference of one who apologises to an inferior in order to maintain his own character for politeness, but with perfect indifference whether his excuses are or are not held satisfactory. And as the clergyman gazed, the belief which had so strongly clung to him that the Earl of Etherington and young Valentine Bulmer were the same individual person, melted away like frost-work before the morning sun, and that so completely, that he marvelled at himself for having ever entertained it. Some strong resemblance of features there must have been to have led him into such a delusion; but the person, the tone, the manner of expression, were absolutely different; and his attention being now especially directed towards these particulars, Mr. Cargill was inclined to think the two personages almost totally dissimilar.

The clergyman had now only to make his apology and fall back from the head of the table to some lower seat, which his modesty would have preferred, when he was suddenly seized upon by the Lady Penelope Penfeather, who, detaining him in the most elegant and persuasive manner possible, insisted that they should be introduced to each other by Mr. Mowbray, and

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that Mr. Cargill should sit beside her at table.—She had heard so much of his learning—so much of his excellent character—desired so much to make his acquaintance, that she could not think of losing an opportunity, which Mr. Cargill's learned seclusion rendered so very rare—in a word, catching the Black Lion was the order of the day; and her ladyship having trapped her prey, soon sat triumphant with him by her side.

A second separation was thus effected betwixt Touchwood and his friend; for the former, not being included in the invitation, or, indeed, at all noticed by Lady Penelope, was obliged to find room at a lower part of the table, where he excited much surprise by the dexterity with which he despatched boiled rice with chop-sticks.

Mr. Cargill being thus exposed, without a consort, to the fire of Lady Penelope, speedily found it so brisk and incessant, as to drive his complaisance, little tried as it had been for many years by small talk, almost to extremity. She began by begging him to draw his chair close, for an instinctive terror of fine ladies had made him keep his distance. At the same time she hoped "he was not afraid of her as an Episcopalian; her father had belonged to that communion; for," she added, with what was intended for an arch smile, "we were somewhat naughty in the forty-five, as you may have heard; but all that was over, and she was sure Mr. Cargill was too liberal to entertain any dislike or shyness on that score.—She could assure him she was far from disliking the Presbyterian form—indeed she had often wished to hear it, where she was sure to be both delighted and edified" (here a gracious smile), "in the church of St. Ronan's—and hoped to do so whenever Mr. Mowbray had got a stove, which he had ordered from Edinburgh, on purpose to air his pew for her accommodation."

All this, which was spoken with wreathed smiles and nods, and so much civility as to remind the clergyman of a cup of tea over-sweetened to conceal its want of strength and flavour, required and received no farther answer than an accommodating look and acquiescent bow.

"Ah, Mr. Cargill," continued the inexhaustible Lady Penelope, "your profession has so many demands on the heart as well as the understanding—is so much connected with the kindnesses and charities of our nature—with our best and purest feelings, Mr. Cargill! You know what Goldsmith says:—

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——'in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched, and wept, and felt, and prayed for all.'

And then Dryden has such a picture of a parish priest, so inimitable, one would think, did we not hear now and then of some living mortal presuming to emulate its features" (here another insinuating nod and expressive smile).

"'Refined himself to soul, to curb the sense
And almost made a sin of abstinence.
Yet had his aspect nothing of severe,
But such a face as promised him sincere;
Nothing reserved or sullen was to see,
But sweet regard and pleasing sanctity.'"

While her ladyship declaimed, the clergyman's wandering eye confessed his absent mind; his thoughts travelling, perhaps, to accomplish a truce betwixt Saladin and Conrade of Mountserrat, unless they chanced to be occupied with some occurrences of that very day, so that the lady was obliged to recall her indocile auditor with the leading question, "You are well acquainted with Dryden, of course, Mr. Cargill?"

"I have not the honour, madam," said Mr. Cargill, starting from his reverie, and but half understanding the question he replied to.

"Sir!" said the lady, in surprise.

"Madam!—my lady!" answered Mr. Cargill, in embarrassment.

"I asked you if you admired Dryden;—but you learned men are so absent—perhaps you thought I said Leyden."

"A lamp too early quenched, madam," said Mr. Cargill; "I knew him well."

"And so did I," eagerly replied the lady of the cerulean buskin; "he spoke ten languages—how mortifying to poor me, Mr. Cargill, who could only boast of five!—but I have studied a little since that time—I must have you to help me in my studies, Mr. Cargill—it will be charitable—but perhaps you are afraid of a female pupil?"

A thrill, arising from former recollections, passed through poor Cargill's mind with as much acuteness as the pass of a rapier might have done through his body; and we cannot help remarking, that a forward prater in society, like a busy bustler in a crowd, besides all other general points of annoyance, is

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eternally rubbing upon some tender point, and galling men's feelings, without knowing or regarding it.

"You must assist me, besides, in my little charities, Mr. Cargill, now that you and I are become so well acquainted.—There is that Ann Heggie—I sent her a trifle yesterday, but I am told—I should not mention it, but only one would not have the little they have to bestow lavished on an improper object—I am told she is not quite proper—an unwedded mother in short, Mr. Cargill—and it would be especially unbecoming in me to encourage profligacy."

"I believe, madam," said the clergyman, gravely, "the poor woman's distress may justify your ladyship's bounty, even if her conduct has been faulty."

"Oh, I am no prude, neither, I assure you, Mr. Cargill," answered the Lady Penelope. "I never withdraw my countenance from any one but on the most irrefragable grounds. I could tell you of an intimate friend of my own, whom I have supported against the whole clamour of the people at the Well, because I believe, from the bottom of my soul, she is only thoughtless—nothing in the world but thoughtless—O Mr. Cargill, how can you look across the table so intelligently?—who would have thought it of you?—Oh fie, to make such personal applications!"

"Upon my word, madam, I am quite at a loss to comprehend"——

"Oh fie, fie, Mr. Cargill," throwing in as much censure and surprise as a confidential whisper can convey—"you looked at my Lady Binks—I know what you think, but you are quite wrong, I assure you; you are entirely wrong.—I wish she would not flirt quite so much with that young Lord Etherington though, Mr. Cargill—her situation is particular—Indeed, I believe she wears out his patience; for see he is leaving the room before we sit down—how singular!—And then do you not think it very odd, too, that Miss Mowbray has not come down to us?"

"Miss Mowbray!—what of Miss Mowbray—is she not here?" said Mr. Cargill, starting, and with an expression of interest which he had not yet bestowed on any of her ladyship's liberal communications.

"Ay, poor Miss Mowbray," said Lady Penelope, lowering her voice, and shaking her head; "she has not appeared—her

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brother went up stairs a few minutes since, I believe, to bring her down, and so we are all left here to look at each other—How very awkward!—But you know Clara Mowbray."

"I, madam?" said Mr. Cargill, who was now sufficiently attentive; "I really—I know Miss Mowbray—that is, I knew her some years since—But your ladyship knows she has been long in bad health—uncertain health at least, and I have seen nothing of the young lady for a very long time."

"I know it, my dear Mr. Cargill—I know it," continued the Lady Penelope, in the same tone of deep sympathy, "I know it; and most unhappy surely have been the circumstances that have separated her from your advice and friendly counsel.—All this I am aware of—and to say truth, it has been chiefly on poor Clara's account that I have been giving you the trouble of fixing an acquaintance upon you.—You and I together, Mr. Cargill, might do wonders to cure her unhappy state of mind—I am sure we might—that is, if you could bring your mind to repose absolute confidence in me."

"Has Miss Mowbray desired your ladyship to converse with me upon any subject which interests her?" said the clergyman, with more cautious shrewdness than Lady Penelope had suspected him of possessing. "I will in that case be happy to hear the nature of her communication; and whatever my poor services can perform, your ladyship may command them."

"I—I—I cannot just assert," said her ladyship with hesitation, "that I have Miss Mowbray's direct instructions to speak to you, Mr. Cargill, upon the present subject. But my affection for the dear girl is so very great—and then, you know, the inconveniences which may arise from this match."

"From which match, Lady Penelope?" said Mr. Cargill.

"Nay, now, Mr. Cargill, you really carry the privilege of Scotland too far—I have not put a single question to you, but what you have answered by another—let us converse intelligibly for five minutes, if you can but condescend so far."

"For any length of time which your ladyship may please to command," said Mr. Cargill, "provided the subject regard your ladyship's own affairs or mine—could I suppose these last for a moment likely to interest you."

"Out upon you," said the lady, laughing affectedly; "you should really have been a Catholic priest instead of a Presbyterian. What an invaluable father confessor have the fair sex

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lost in you, Mr. Cargill, and how dexterously you would have evaded any cross-examinations which might have committed your penitents!"

"Your ladyship's raillery is far too severe for me to withstand or reply to," said Mr. Cargill, bowing with more ease than her ladyship expected; and, retiring gently backward, he extricated himself from a conversation which he began to find somewhat embarrassing.

At that moment a murmur of surprise took place in the apartment, which was just entered by Miss Mowbray, leaning on her brother's arm. The cause of this murmur will be best understood by narrating what had passed betwixt the brother and sister.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND.

EXPOSTULATION.

Seek not the feast in these irreverent robes;
Go to my chamber—put on clothes of mine.
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW.

It was with a mixture of anxiety, vexation, and resentment, that Mowbray, just when he had handed Lady Penelope into the apartment, where the tables were covered, observed that his sister was absent, and that Lady Binks was hanging on the arm of Lord Etherington, to whose rank it would properly have fallen to escort the lady of the house. An anxious and hasty glance cast through the room ascertained that she was absent, nor could the ladies present give any account of her after she had quitted the gardens, except that Lady Penelope had spoken a few words with her in her own apartment, immediately after the scenic entertainment was concluded.

Thither Mowbray hurried, complaining aloud of his sister's laziness in dressing, but internally hoping that the delay was occasioned by nothing of a more important character.

He hastened up stairs, entered her sitting-room without ceremony, and knocking at the door of her dressing-room, begged her to make haste.

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"Here is the whole company impatient," he said, assuming a tone of pleasantry; "and Sir Bingo Binks exclaiming for your presence, that he may be let loose on the cold meat."

"Paddock calls," said Clara from within; "anon—anon!"

"Nay, it is no jest, Clara," continued her brother; "for Lady Penelope is miauling like a starved cat!"

"I come—I come, graymalkin," answered Clara, in the same vein as before, and entered the parlour as she spoke, her finery entirely thrown aside, and dressed in the riding-habit which was her usual and favourite attire.

Her brother was both surprised and offended. "On my soul," he said, "Clara, this is behaving very ill. I indulge you in every freak upon ordinary occasions, but you might surely on this day, of all others, have condescended to appear something like my sister, and a gentlewoman receiving company in her own house."

"Why, dearest John," said Clara, "so that the guests have enough to eat and drink, I cannot conceive why I should concern myself about their finery, or they trouble themselves about my plain clothes."

"Come, come, Clara, this will not do," answered Mowbray; "you must positively go back into your dressing-room, and huddle your things on as fast as you can. You cannot go down to the company dressed as you are."

"I certainly can, and I certainly will, John—I have made a fool of myself once this morning to oblige you, and for the rest of the day I am determined to appear in my own dress; that is, in one which shows I neither belong to the world, nor wish to have anything to do with its fashions."

"By my soul, Clara, I will make you repent this!" said Mowbray, with more violence than he usually exhibited where his sister was concerned.

"You cannot, dear John," she coolly replied, "unless by beating me; and that I think you would repent of yourself."

"I do not know but what it were the best way of managing you," said Mowbray, muttering between his teeth; but, commanding his violence, he only said aloud, "I am sure, from long experience, Clara, that your obstinacy will at the long run beat my anger. Do let us compound the point for once—keep your old habit, since you are so fond of making a sight of yourself, and only throw the shawl round your shoulders—it has been

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exceedingly admired, and every woman in the house longs to see it closer—they can hardly believe it genuine."

"Do be a man, Mowbray," answered his sister; "meddle with your horse-sheets, and leave shawls alone."

"Do you be a woman, Clara, and think a little on them, when custom and decency render it necessary.—Nay, is it possible!—Will you not stir?—not oblige me in such a trifle as this?"

"I would indeed if I could," said Clara; "but since you must know the truth—do not be angry—I have not the shawl, I have given it away—given it up, perhaps I should say, to the rightful owner.—She has promised me something or other in exchange for it, however. I have given it to Lady Penelope."

"Yes," answered Mowbray, "some of the work of her own fair hands, I suppose, or a couple of her ladyship's drawings, made up into fire-screens.—On my word—on my soul, this is too bad!—It is using me too ill, Clara—far too ill. If the thing had been of no value, my giving it to you should have fixed some upon it.—Good-even to you; we will do as well as we can without you."

"Nay, but, my dear John—stay but a moment," said Clara, taking his arm as he sullenly turned towards the door; "there are but two of us on earth—do not let us quarrel about a trumpery shawl."

"Trumpery!" said Mowbray; "it cost fifty guineas, by G—, which I can but ill spare—trumpery!"

"Oh, never think of the cost," said Clara; "it was your gift, and that should, I own, have been enough to have made me keep to my death's day the poorest rag of it. But really Lady Penelope looked so very miserable, and twisted her poor face into so many odd expressions of anger and chagrin, that I resigned it to her, and agreed to say she had lent it to me for the performance. I believe she was afraid that I would change my mind, or that you would resume it as a seignorial waif; for, after she had walked a few turns with it wrapped around her, merely by way of taking possession, she despatched it by a special messenger to her apartment at the Well."

"She may go to the devil," said Mowbray, "for a greedy unconscionable jade, who has varnished over a selfish, spiteful heart, that is as hard as a flint, with a fine glossing of taste and sensibility."

"Nay, but, John," replied his sister, "she really had some-

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thing to complain of in the present case. The shawl had been bespoken on her account, or very nearly so—she showed me the tradesman's letter—only some agent of yours had come in between with the ready money, which no tradesman can resist. —Ah, John! I suspect half of your anger is owing to the failure of a plan to mortify poor Lady Pen, and that she has more to complain of than you have.—Come, come, you have had the advantage of her in the first display of this fatal piece of finery, if wearing it on my poor shoulders can be called a display—e'en make her welcome to the rest for peace's sake, and let us go down to these good folks, and you shall see how pretty and civil I shall behave."

Mowbray, a spoiled child, and with all the petted habits of indulgence, was exceedingly fretted at the issue of the scheme which he had formed for mortifying Lady Penelope; but he saw at once the necessity of saying nothing more to his sister on the subject. Vengeance he privately muttered against Lady Pen, whom he termed an absolute harpy in blue stockings; unjustly forgetting, that, in the very important affair at issue, he himself had been the first to interfere with and defeat her ladyship's designs on the garment in question.

"But I will blow her," he said, "I will blow her ladyship's conduct in the business! She shall not outwit a poor whimsical girl like Clara, without hearing it on more sides than one."

With this Christian and gentleman-like feeling towards Lady Penelope, he escorted his sister into the eating-room, and led her to her proper place at the head of the table. It was the negligence displayed in her dress which occasioned the murmur of surprise that greeted Clara on her entrance. Mowbray, as he placed his sister in her chair, made her general apology for her late appearance, and her riding-habit. "Some fairies," he supposed, "Puck, or such like tricksy goblin, had been in her wardrobe, and carried off whatever was fit for wearing."

There were answers from every quarter—that it would have been too much to expect Miss Mowbray to dress for their amusement a second time—that nothing she chose to wear could misbecome Miss Mowbray—that she had set like the sun, in her splendid scenic dress, and now rose like the full moon in her ordinary attire (this flight was by the Reverend Mr.

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Chatterly),—and that "Miss Mowbray being at hame, had an unco gude right to please hersell;" which last piece of politeness, being at least as much to the purpose as any that had preceded it, was the contribution of honest Mrs. Blower, and was replied to by Miss Mowbray with a particular and most gracious bow.

Mrs. Blower ought to have rested her colloquial fame, as Dr. Johnson would have said, upon a compliment so evidently acceptable, but no one knows where to stop. She thrust her broad, good-natured, delighted countenance forward, and sending her voice from the bottom to the top of the table, like her umquhile husband when calling to his mate during a breeze, wondered "why Miss Clara Mowbrie didna wear that grand shawl she had on at the play-making, and her just sitting upon the wind of a door. Nae doubt it was for fear of the soup, and the butter-boats and the like;—but *she* had three shawls, which she really fand was ane ower mony—if Miss Mowbrie wad like to wear ane o' them—it was but imitashion to be sure—but it wad keep her shouthers as warm as if it were real Indian, and if it were dirtied it was the less matter."

"Much obliged, Mrs. Blower," said Mowbray, unable to resist the temptation which this speech offered; "but my sister is not yet of quality sufficient to entitle her to rob her friends of their shawls."

Lady Penelope coloured to the eyes, and bitter was the retort that arose to her tongue; but she suppressed it, and nodding to Miss Mowbray in the most friendly way in the world, yet with a very particular expression, she only said, "So you have told your brother of the little transaction which we have had this morning?—*Tu me lo pagherai*—I give you fair warning, take care none of your secrets come into my keeping—that's all."

Upon what mere trifles do the important events of human life sometimes depend! If Lady Penelope had given way to her first movements of resentment, the probable issue would have been some such half-comic, half-serious skirmish, as her ladyship and Mr. Mowbray had often amused the company withal. But revenge, which is suppressed and deferred, is always most to be dreaded; and to the effects of the deliberate resentment which Lady Penelope cherished upon this trifling occasion, must be traced the events which our history has to

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record. Secretly did she determine to return the shawl, which she had entertained hopes of making her own upon very reasonable terms; and as secretly did she resolve to be revenged both upon brother and sister, conceiving herself already possessed, to a certain degree, of a clew to some part of their family history, which might serve for a foundation on which to raise her projected battery. The ancient offences and emulation of importance of the Laird of St. Ronan's, and the superiority which had been given to Clara in the exhibition of the day, combined with the immediate cause of resentment; and it only remained for her to consider how her revenge could be most signally accomplished.

Whilst such thoughts were passing through Lady Penelope's mind, Mowbray was searching with his eyes for the Earl of Etherington, judging that it might be proper, in the course of the entertainment, or before the guests had separated, to make him formally acquainted with his sister, as a preface to the more intimate connection which must, in prosecution of the plan agreed upon, take place betwixt them. Greatly to his surprise, the young Earl was nowhere visible, and the place which he had occupied by the side of Lady Binks had been quietly appropriated by Winterblossom, as the best and softest chair in the room, and nearest to the head of the table, where the choicest of the entertainment is usually arranged. This honest gentleman, after a few insipid compliments to her ladyship upon her performance as Queen of the Amazons, had betaken himself to the much more interesting occupation of ogling the dishes, through the glass which hung suspended at his neck by a gold chain of Maltese workmanship. After looking and wondering for a few seconds, Mowbray addressed himself to the old beaugarçon, and asked him what had become of Etherington.

"Retreated," said Winterblossom, "and left but his compliments to you behind him—a complaint, I think, in his wounded arm —Upon my word, that soup has a most appetising flavour! —Lady Penelope, shall I have the honour to help you?—no! —nor you, Lady Binks?—you are too cruel; I must comfort myself, like a heathen priest of old, by eating the sacrifice which the deities have scorned to accept of."

Here he helped himself to the plate of soup which he had in vain offered to the ladies, and transferred the farther duty of

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dispensing it to Master Chatterly; "it is your profession, sir, to propitiate the divinities—ahem!"

"I did not think Lord Etherington would have left us so soon," said Mowbray; "but we must do the best we can without his countenance."

So saying, he assumed his place at the bottom of the table, and did his best to support the character of a hospitable and joyous landlord, while on her part, with much natural grace, and delicacy of attention calculated to set every body at their ease, his sister presided at the upper end of the board. But the vanishing of Lord Etherington in a manner so sudden and unaccountable—the obvious ill-humour of Lady Penelope—and the steady, though passive sullenness of Lady Binks, spread among the company a gloom like that produced by an autumnal mist upon a pleasing landscape. The women were low-spirited, dull, nay, peevish, they did not well know why; and the men could not be joyous, though the ready resource of old hock and champagne made some of them talkative. Lady Penelope broke up the party by well-feigned apprehension of the difficulties, nay, dangers of returning by so rough a road. Lady Binks begged a seat with her ladyship, as Sir Bingo, she said, judging from his devotion to the green flask, was likely to need their carriage home. From the moment of their departure, it became bad tone to remain behind; and all, as in a retreating army, were eager to be foremost, excepting MacTurk and a few stanch topers, who, unused to meet with such good cheer every day of their lives, prudently determined to make the most of the opportunity.

We will not dwell on the difficulties attending the transportation of a large company by a few carriages, though the delay and disputes thereby occasioned were of course more intolerable than in the morning, for the parties had no longer the hopes of a happy day before them, as a bribe to submit to temporary inconvenience. The impatience of many was so great, that, though the evening was raw, they chose to go on foot rather than await the dull routine of the returning carriages; and as they retired, they agreed, with one consent, to throw the blame of whatever inconvenience they might sustain on their host and hostess, who had invited so large a party before getting a shorter and better road made between the Well and Shaws Castle.

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"It would have been so easy to repair the path by the Buckstane!"

And this was all the thanks which Mr. Mowbray received for an entertainment which had cost him so much trouble and expense, and had been looked forward to by the good society at the Well with such impatient expectation.

"It was an unco pleasant show," said the good-natured Mrs. Blower, "only it was a pity it was sae tediousome; and there was surely an awfu' waste of gauze and muslin."

But so well had Dr. Quackleben improved his numerous opportunities, that the good lady was much reconciled to affairs in general, by the prospect of coughs, rheumatisms, and other maladies acquired upon the occasion, which were likely to afford that learned gentleman, in whose prosperity she much interested herself, a very profitable harvest.

Mowbray, somewhat addicted to the service of Bacchus, did not find himself freed, by the secession of so large a proportion of the company, from the service of the jolly god, although, upon the present occasion, he could well have dispensed with his orgies. Neither the song, nor the pun, nor the jest, had any power to kindle his heavy spirit, mortified as he was by the event of his party being so different from the brilliant consummation which he had acticipated. The guests, stanch boon companions, suffered not, however, their party to flag for want of the landlord's participation, but continued to drink bottle after bottle, with as little regard for Mr. Mowbray's grave looks, as if they had been carousing at the Mowbray Arms, instead of the Mowbray mansion-house. Midnight at length released him, when, with an unsteady step, he sought his own apartment, cursing himself and his companions, consigning his own person with all despatch to his bed, and bequeathing those of the company to as many mosses and quagmires as could be found betwixt Shaws Castle and St. Ronan's Well.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-THIRD.

THE PROPOSAL.

Oh! you would be a vestal maid, I warrant,
The bride of heaven—Come—we may shake your purpose;
For here I bring in hand a jolly suitor
Hath ta'en degrees in the seven sciences
That ladies love best—he is young and noble,
Handsome and valiant, gay, and rich, and liberal.

THE NUN.

THE morning after a debauch is usually one of reflection, even to the most customary boon companion; and, in the retrospect of the preceding day, the young Laird of St. Ronan's saw nothing very consolatory, unless that the excess was not, in the present case, of his own seeking, but had arisen out of the necessary duties of a landlord, or what were considered as such by his companions.

But it was not so much his dizzy recollections of the late carouse which haunted him on awakening, as the inexplicability which seemed to shroud the purposes and conduct of his new ally the Earl of Etherington.

That young nobleman had seen Miss Mowbray, had declared his high satisfaction, had warmly and voluntarily renewed the proposal which he had made ere she was yet known to him—and yet, far from seeking an opportunity to be introduced to her, he had even left the party abruptly, in order to avoid the necessary intercourse which must there have taken place between them. His lordship's flirtation with Lady Binks had not escaped the attention of the sagacious Mowbray—her ladyship also had been in a hurry to leave Shaws Castle; and Mowbray promised to himself to discover the nature of this connection through Mrs. Gingham, her ladyship's attendant, or otherwise; vowing deeply, at the same time, that no peer in the realm should make an affectation of addressing Miss Mowbray a cloak for another and more secret intrigue. But his doubts on this subject were in great measure removed by the arrival of one of Lord Etherington's grooms with the following letter:—

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"My dear Mowbray,

"You would naturally be surprised at my escape from the table yesterday before you returned to it, or your lovely sister had graced it with her presence. I must confess my folly; and I may do so the more boldly, for, as the footing on which I first opened this treaty was not a very romantic one, you will scarce suspect me of wishing to render it such. But I did in reality feel, during the whole of yesterday, a reluctance which I cannot express, to be presented to the lady on whose favour the happiness of my future life is to depend, upon such a public occasion, and in the presence of so promiscuous a company. I had my mask, indeed, to wear while in the promenade, but, of course, that was to be laid aside at table, and, consequently, I must have gone through the ceremony of introduction; a most interesting moment, which I was desirous to defer till a fitter season. I trust you will permit me to call upon you at Shaws Castle this morning, in the hope—the anxious hope—of being allowed to pay my duty to Miss Mowbray, and apologise for not waiting upon her yesterday. I expect your answer with the utmost impatience, being always yours, etc. etc. etc.

"Etherington."

"This," said St. Ronan's to himself, as he folded up the letter deliberately, after having twice read it over, "seems all fair and above-board; I could not wish anything more explicit; and moreover, it puts into black and white, as old Mick would say, what only rested before on our private conversation. An especial cure for the headache, such a billet as this in a morning."

So saying, he sat him down and wrote an answer, expressing the pleasure he should have in seeing his lordship as soon as he thought proper. He watched even the departure of the groom, and beheld him gallop off, with the speed of one who knows that his quick return was expected by an impatient master.

Mowbray remained for a few minutes by himself, and reflected with delight upon the probable consequences of this match;—the advancement of his sister—and, above all, the various advantages which must necessarily accrue to himself, by so close an alliance with one whom he had good reason to think deep *in the secret*, and capable of rendering him the most material assistance in his speculations on the turf, and in the sporting

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world. He then sent a servant to let Miss Mowbray know that he intended to breakfast with her.

"I suppose, John," said Clara, as her brother entered the apartment, "you are glad of a weaker cup this morning than those you were drinking last night—you were carousing till after the first cock."

"Yes," said Mowbray, "that sandbed, old MacTurk, upon whom whole hogsheads make no impression, did make a bad boy of me—but the day is over, and they will scarce catch me in such another scrape.—What did you think of the masks?"

"Supported as well," said Clara, "as such folk support the disguise of gentlemen and ladies during life; and that is, with a great deal of bustle, and very little propriety."

"I saw only one good mask there, and that was a Spaniard," said her brother.

"Oh, I saw him too," answered Clara; "but he wore his visor on. An old Indian merchant, or some such thing, seemed to me a better character—the Spaniard did nothing but stalk about and twangle his guitar, for the amusement of my Lady Binks, as I think."

"He is a very clever fellow, though, that same Spaniard," rejoined Mowbray—"Can you guess who he is?"

"No, indeed; nor shall I take the trouble of trying. To set to guessing about it, were as bad as seeing the whole mummery over again."

"Well," replied her brother, "you will allow one thing at least—Bottom was well acted—you cannot deny that."

"Yes," replied Clara, "that worthy really deserved to wear his ass's head to the end of the chapter—but what of him?"

"Only conceive that he should be the very same person with that handsome Spaniard," replied Mowbray.

"Then there is one fool fewer than I thought there was," replied Clara with the greatest indifference.

Her brother bit his lip.

"Clara," he said, "I believe you are an excellent good girl, and clever to boot, but pray do not set up for wit and oddity; there is nothing in life so intolerable as pretending to think differently from other people.—That gentleman was the Earl of Etherington."

This annunciation, though made in what was meant to be an imposing tone, had no impression on Clara.

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"I hope he plays the peer better than the Hidalgo," she replied, carelessly.

"Yes," answered Mowbray, "he is one of the handsomest men of the time, and decidedly fashionable—you will like him much when you see him in private."

"It is of little consequence whether I do or no," answered Clara.

"You mistake the matter," said Mowbray, gravely; "it may be of considerable consequence."

"Indeed!" said Clara, with a smile; "I must suppose myself, then, too important a person not to make my approbation necessary to one of your first-rates. He cannot pretend to pass muster at St. Ronan's without it.—Well, I will depute my authority to Lady Binks, and she shall pass your new recruits instead of me."

"This is all nonsense, Clara," said Mowbray. "Lord Etherington calls here this very morning, and wishes to be made known to you. I expect you will receive him as a particular friend of mine."

"With all my heart—so you will engage, after this visit, to keep him down with your other particular friends at the Well.—You know it is a bargain that you bring neither buck nor pointer into my parlour—the one worries my cat, and the other my temper."

"You mistake me entirely, Clara—this is a very different visitor from any I have ever introduced to you. I expect to see him often here, and I hope you and he will be better friends than you think of. I have more reasons for wishing this than I have now time to tell you."

Clara remained silent for an instant, then looked at her brother with an anxious and scrutinising glance, as if she wished to penetrate into his inmost purpose.

"If I thought"—she said, after a minute's consideration, and with an altered and disturbed tone; "but no—I will not think that Heaven intends me such a blow—least of all, that it should come from your hands." She walked hastily to the window, and threw it open—then shut it again, and returned to her seat, saying, with a constrained smile, "May Heaven forgive you, brother, but you frightened me heartily."

"I do not mean to do so, Clara," said Mowbray, who saw the necessity of soothing her; "I only alluded in joke to those

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chances that are never out of other girls' heads, though you never seem to calculate on them."

"I wish you, my dear John," said Clara, struggling again to regain entire composure, "I wish *you* would profit by my example, and give up the science of chance also—it will not avail you."

"How d'ye know that?—I'll show you the contrary, you silly wench," answered Mowbray—"Here is a banker's bill, payable to your own order, for the cash you lent me, and something over—don't let old Mick have the fingering, but let Bindloose manage it for you—he is the honester man between two d—d knaves."

"Will not you, brother, send it to the man Bindloose yourself?"

"No,—no," replied Mowbray—he might confuse it with some of my transactions, and so you forfeit your stake."

"Well, I am glad you are able to pay me, for I want to buy Campbell's new work."

"I wish you joy of your purchase—but don't scratch me for not caring about it.—I know as little of books as you of the long odds. And come now, be serious, and tell me if you will be a good girl—lay aside your whims, and receive this English young nobleman like a lady as you are?"

"That were easy," said Clara—"but—but—Pray, ask no more of me than just to see him.—Say to him at once, I am a poor creature in body, in mind, in spirits, in temper, in understanding—above all, say that I can receive him only once."

"I shall say no such thing," said Mowbray, bluntly; "it is good to be plain with you at once.—I thought of putting off this discussion—but since it must come, the sooner it is over the better.—You are to understand, Clara Mowbray, that Lord Etherington has a particular view in this visit, and that his view has my full sanction and approbation."

"I thought so," said Clara, in the same altered tone of voice in which she had before spoken; "my mind foreboded this last of misfortunes!—But, Mowbray, you have no child before you—I neither will nor can see this nobleman."

"How!" exclaimed Mowbray, fiercely; "do you dare return me so peremptory an answer?—Think better of it, for if we differ, you will find you will have the worst of the game."

"Rely upon it," she continued, with more vehemence, "I

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will see him nor no man upon the footing you mention—my resolution is taken, and threats and entreaties will prove equally unavailing."

"Upon my word, madam," said Mowbray, "you have, for a modest and retired young lady, plucked up a goodly spirit of your own!—But you shall find mine equals it. If you do not agree to see my friend Lord Etherington, ay, and to receive him with the politeness due to the consideration I entertain for him, by Heaven! Clara, I will no longer regard you as my father's daughter.—Think what you are giving up—the affection and protection of a brother—and for what?—merely for an idle point of etiquette.—You cannot, I suppose, even in the workings of your romantic brain, imagine that the days of Clarissa Harlowe and Harriet Byron are come back again, when women were married by main force? and it is monstrous vanity in you to suppose that Lord Etherington, since he has honoured you with any thoughts at all, will not be satisfied with a proper and civil refusal—You are no such prize, methinks, that the days of romance are to come back for you."

"I care not what days they are," said Clara—"I tell you I will not see Lord Etherington, or any one else, upon such preliminaries as you have stated—I cannot—I will not—and I ought not.—Had you meant me to receive him, which can be a matter of no consequence whatever, you should have left him on the footing of an ordinary visitor—as it is, I will not see him."

"You *shall* see and hear him both," said Mowbray; "you shall find me as obstinate as you are—as willing to forget I am a brother, as you to forget that you have one."

"It is time, then," replied Clara, "that this house, once our father's, should no longer hold us both. I can provide for myself, and may God bless you!"

"You take it coolly, madam," said her brother, walking through the apartment with much anxiety both of look and gesture.

"I do," she answered; "for it is what I have often foreseen—Yes, brother, I have often foreseen that you would make your sister the subject of your plots and schemes, so soon as other stakes failed you. That hour is come, and I am, as you see, prepared to meet it."

"And where may you propose to retire to?" said Mowbray. "I think that I, your only relation and natural guardian, have

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a right to know that—my honour and that of my family is concerned."

"Your honour!" she retorted, with a keen glance at him; "your interest, I suppose you mean, is somehow connected with the place of my abode.—But keep yourself patient—the den of the rock, the linn of the brook, should be my choice, rather than a palace without my freedom."

"You are mistaken, however," said Mowbray, sternly, "if you hope to enjoy more freedom than I think you capable of making a good use of. The law authorises, and reason, and even affection, require that you should be put under restraint for your own safety, and that of your character. You roamed the woods a little too much in my father's time, if all stories be true."

"I did—I did indeed, Mowbray," said Clara, weeping; "God pity me and forgive you for upbraiding me with my state of mind—I know I cannot sometimes trust my own judgment; but is it for you to remind me of this?"

Mowbray was at once softened and embarrassed.

"What folly is this?" he said; "you say the most cutting things to me—are ready to fly from my house—and when I am provoked to make an angry answer, you burst into tears!"

"Say you did not mean what you said, my dearest brother!" exclaimed Clara; "Oh say you did not mean it!—Do not take my liberty from me—it is all I have left, and, God knows, it is a poor comfort in the sorrows I undergo. I will put a fair face on everything—will go down to the Well—will wear what you please, and say what you please—but oh! leave me the liberty of my solitude here—let me weep alone in the house of my father—and do not force a broken-hearted sister to lay her death at your door.—My span must be a brief one, but let not your hand shake the sand-glass!—Disturb me not—let me pass quietly—I do not ask this so much for my sake as for your own. I would have you think of me, sometimes, Mowbray, after I am gone, and without the bitter reflections which the recollection of harsh usage will assuredly bring with it. Pity me, were it but for your own sake.—I have deserved nothing but compassion at your hand—There are but two of us on earth, why should we make each other miserable?"

She accompanied these entreaties with a flood of tears, and the most heart-bursting sobs. Mowbray knew not what to determine. On the one hand he was bound by his promise to

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the Earl; on the other, his sister was in no condition to receive such a visitor; nay, it was most probable, that if he adopted the strong measure of compelling her to receive him, her behaviour would probably be such as totally to break off the projected match, on the success of which he had founded so many castles in the air. In this dilemma, he had again recourse to argument.

"Clara," he said, "I am, as I have repeatedly said, your only relation and guardian—if there be any real reason why you ought not to receive, and, at least, make a civil reply to such a negotiation as the Earl of Etherington has thought fit to open, surely I ought to be intrusted with it. You enjoyed far too much of that liberty which you seem to prize so highly during my father's lifetime—in the last years of it at least—have you formed any foolish attachment during that time, which now prevents you from receiving such a visit as Lord Etherington has threatened?"

"Threatened!—the expression is well chosen," said Miss Mowbray; "and nothing can be more dreadful than such a threat, excepting its accomplishment."

"I am glad your spirits are reviving," replied her brother; "but that is no answer to my question."

"Is it necessary," said Clara, "that one must have actually some engagement or entanglement, to make them unwilling to be given in marriage, or even to be pestered upon such a subject?—Many young men declare they intend to die bachelors, why may not I be permitted to commence old maid at three-and-twenty?—Let me do so, like a kind brother, and there were never nephews and nieces so petted and so scolded, so nursed and so cuffed by a maiden aunt, as your children, when you have them, shall be by aunt Clara."

"And why not say all this to Lord Etherington?" said Mowbray; "wait until he propose such a terrible bugbear as matrimony, before you refuse to receive him. Who knows, the whim that he hinted at may have passed away—he was, as you say, flirting with Lady Binks, and her ladyship has a good deal of address, as well as beauty."

"Heaven improve both (in an honest way), if she will but keep his lordship to herself!" said Clara.

"Well, then," continued her brother, "things standing thus, I do not think you will have much trouble with his lordship—no more, perhaps, than just to give him a civil denial. After

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having spoken on such a subject to a man of my condition, he cannot well break off without you give him an apology."

"If that is all," said Clara, "he shall, as soon as he gives me an opportunity, receive such an answer as will leave him at liberty to woo any one whatsoever of Eve's daughters, excepting Clara Mowbray. Methinks I am so eager to set the captive free, that I now wish as much for his lordship's appearance as I feared it a little while since."

"Nay, nay, but let us go fair and softly," said her brother. "You are not to refuse him before he asks the question."

"Certainly," said Clara; "but I well know how to manage that—he shall never ask the question at all. I will restore Lady Binks's admirer, without accepting so much as a civility in ransom."

"Worse and worse, Clara," answered Mowbray; "you are to remember he is my friend and guest, and he must not be affronted in my house. Leave things to themselves.—Besides, consider an instant, Clara—had you not better take a little time for reflection in this case? The offer is a splendid one—title—fortune—and, what is more, a fortune which you will be well entitled to share largely in."

"This is beyond our implied treaty," said Clara. "I have yielded more than ever I thought I should have done, when I agreed that this Earl should be introduced to me on the footing of a common visitor; and now you talk favourably of his pretensions. This is an encroachment, Mowbray, and now I shall relapse into my obstinacy, and refuse to see him at all."

"Do as you will," replied Mowbray, sensible that it was only by working on her affections that he had any chance of carrying a point against her inclination,—"Do as you will, my dear Clara; but for Heaven's sake, wipe your eyes."

"And behave myself," said she, trying to smile as she obeyed him,—"behave myself, you would say, like folks of this world; but the quotation is lost on you, who never read either Prior or Shakespeare."

"I thank Heaven for that," said Mowbray. "I have enough to burden my brain, without carrying such a lumber of rhymes in it as you and Lady Pen do.—Come, that is right; go to the mirror, and make yourself decent."

A woman must be much borne down indeed by pain and suffering, when she loses all respect for her external appearance.

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The madwoman in Bedlam wears her garland of straw with a certain air of pretension; and we have seen a widow whom we knew to be most sincerely affected by a recent deprivation, whose weeds, nevertheless, were arranged with a dolorous degree of grace, which amounted almost to coquetry. Clara Mowbray had also, negligent as she seemed to be of appearances, her own art of the toilet, although of the most rapid and most simple character. She took off her little riding-hat, and, unbinding a lace of Indian gold which retained her locks, shook them in dark and glossy profusion over her very handsome form, which they overshadowed down to her slender waist; and while her brother stood looking on her with a mixture of pride, affection, and compassion, she arranged them with a large comb, and without the assistance of any *femme d'atours*, wove them, in the course of a few minutes, into such a natural head-dress as we see on the statues of the Grecian nymphs.

"Now let me but find my best muff," she said, "come prince and peer, I shall be ready to receive them."

"Pshaw! your muff—who has heard of such a thing these twenty years? Muffs were out of fashion before you were born."

"No matter, John," replied his sister; "when a woman wears a muff, especially a determined old maid like myself, it is a sign she has no intentions to scratch; and therefore the muff serves all the purposes of a white flag, and prevents the necessity of drawing on a glove, so prudentially recommended by the motto of our cousins, the M'Intoshes."*

"Be it as you will, then," said Mowbray; "for other than you do will it, you will not suffer it to be.—But how is this? another billet?—We are in request this morning."

"Now, Heaven send his lordship may have judiciously considered all the risks which he is sure to encounter on this charmed ground, and resolved to leave his adventure unattempted," said Miss Mowbray.

Her brother glanced a look of displeasure at her as he broke the seal of the letter, which was addressed to him with the words, "Haste and secrecy," written on the envelope. The contents, which greatly surprised him, we remit to the commencement of the next chapter.

* The well-known crest of this ancient race is a cat rampant, with a motto bearing the caution—"Touch not the cat, but (*i.e.*, *be out*, or *without*) the glove."

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FOURTH.

PRIVATE INFORMATION.

——— Ope this letter,
I can produce a champion that will prove
What is avouched there.———

KING LEAR.

THE billet which Mowbray received, and read in his sister's presence, contained these words:—

"SIR,

"CLARA MOWBRAY has few friends—none, perhaps, excepting yourself, in right of blood, and the writer of this letter, by right of the fondest, truest, and most disinterested attachment that ever man bore to woman. I am thus explicit with you, because, though it is unlikely that I should ever again see or speak to your sister, I am desirous that you should be clearly acquainted with the cause of that interest, which I must always, even to my dying breath, take in her affairs.

"The person, calling himself Lord Etherington, is, I am aware, in the neighbourhood of Shaws Castle, with the intention of paying his addresses to Miss Mowbray; and it is easy for me to foresee, arguing according to the ordinary views of mankind, that he may place his proposals in such a light as may make them seem highly desirable. But ere you give this person the encouragement which his offers may seem to deserve, please to inquire whether his fortune is certain, or his rank indisputable; and be not satisfied with light evidence on either point. A man may be in possession of an estate and title, to which he has no better right than his own rapacity and forwardness of assumption; and supposing Mr. Mowbray jealous, as he must be, of the honour of his family, the alliance of such a one cannot but bring disgrace. This comes from one who will make good what he has written."

On the first perusal of a billet so extraordinary, Mowbray was inclined to set it down to the malice of some of the people at the Well, anonymous letters being no uncommon resource of the small wits who frequent such places of general resort, as

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a species of deception safely and easily executed, and well calculated to produce much mischief and confusion. But upon closer consideration, he was shaken in his opinion, and, starting suddenly from the reverie into which he had fallen, asked for the messenger who had brought the letter. "He was in the hall," the servant thought, and Mowbray ran to the hall. No —the messenger was not there, but Mowbray might see his back as he walked up the avenue.—He hollo'd—no answer was returned—he ran after the fellow, whose appearance was that of a countryman. The man quickened his pace as he saw himself pursued, and when he got out of the avenue, threw himself into one of the numerous bypaths which wanderers, who strayed in quest of nuts, or for the sake of exercise, had made in various directions through the extensive copse which surrounded the Castle, and were doubtless the reason of its acquiring the name of Shaws, which signifies, in the Scottish dialect, a wood of this description.

Irritated by the man's obvious desire to avoid him, and naturally obstinate in all his resolutions, Mowbray pursued for a considerable way, until he fairly lost breath; and the flier having been long out of sight, he recollected at length that his engagement with the Earl of Etherington required his attendance at the Castle.

The young lord, indeed, had arrived at Shaws Castle, so few minutes after Mowbray's departure, that it was wonderful they had not met in the avenue. The servant to whom he applied, conceiving that his master must return instantly, as he had gone out without his hat, ushered the Earl, without farther ceremony, into the breakfast-room, where Clara was seated upon one of the window-seats, so busily employed with a book, or perhaps with her own thoughts while she held a book in her hands, that she scarce raised her head, until Lord Etherington, advancing, pronounced the words, "Miss Mowbray." A start, and a loud scream, announced her deadly alarm, and these were repeated as he made one pace nearer, and in a firmer accent said, "Clara."

"No nearer—no nearer," she exclaimed, "if you would have me look upon you and live!" Lord Etherington remained standing, as if uncertain whether to advance or retreat, while with incredible rapidity she poured out her hurried entreaties that he would begone, sometimes addressing him as a real per-

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"No nearer—no nearer," she exclaimed, "if you would have me look upon you and live!"—PAGE 264.

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sonage, sometimes, and more frequently, as a delusive phantom, the offspring of her own excited imagination. "I knew it," she muttered, "I knew what would happen, if my thoughts were forced into that fearful channel.—Speak to me, brother! speak to me while I have reason left, and tell me that what stands before me is but an empty shadow! But it is no shadow—it remains before me in all the lineaments of mortal substance!"

"Clara," said the Earl, with a firm, yet softened voice, "collect and compose yourself. I am, indeed, no shadow—I am a much-injured man, come to demand rights which have been unjustly withheld from me. I am now armed with power as well as justice, and my claims shall be heard."

"Never—never!" replied Clara Mowbray; "since extremity is my portion, let extremity give me courage.—You have no rights—none—I know you not, and I defy you."

"Defy me not, Clara Mowbray," answered the Earl, in a tone and with a manner—how different from those which delighted society! for now he was solemn, tragic, and almost stern, like the judge when he passes sentence upon a criminal. "Defy me not," he repeated. "I am your fate, and it rests with you to make me a kind or severe one."

"Dare you speak thus?" said Clara, her eyes flashing with anger, while her lips grew white, and quivered for fear—"Dare you speak thus, and remember that the same heaven is above our heads, to which you so solemnly vowed you would never see me more without my own consent?"

"That vow was conditional—Francis Tyrrel, as he calls himself, swore the same—hath *he* not seen you?" He fixed a piercing look on her; "He has—you dare not disown it!—And shall an oath, which to him is but a cobweb, be to me a shackle of iron?"

"Alas! it was but for a moment," said Miss Mowbray, sinking in courage, and drooping her head as she spoke.

"Were it but the twentieth part of an instant—the least conceivable space of subdivided time—still, you *did* meet—he saw you—you spoke to him. And me also you must see—me also you must hear! Or I will first claim you for my own in the face of the world; and, having vindicated my rights, I will seek out and extinguish the wretched rival who has dared to interfere with them."

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"Can you speak thus?" said Clara—"can you so burst through the ties of nature?—Have you a heart?"

"I have; and it shall be moulded like wax to your slightest wishes, if you agree to do me justice; but not granite, nor aught else that nature has of hardest, will be more inflexible if you continue a useless opposition!—Clara Mowbray, I am your Fate."

"Not so, proud man," said Clara, rising; "God gave not one potsherd the power to break another, save by his divine permission—my fate is in the will of Him, without whose will even a sparrow falls not to the ground.—Begone—I am strong in faith of heavenly protection."

"Do you speak thus in sincerity?" said the Earl of Etherington; "consider first what is the prospect before you. I stand here in no doubtful or ambiguous character—I offer not the mere name of a husband—propose to you not an humble lot of obscurity and hardship, with fears for the past, and doubts for the future; yet there *was* a time when to a suit like this you could listen favourably.—I stand high among the nobles of the country, and offer you, as my bride, your share in my honours, and in the wealth which becomes them.—Your brother is my friend, and favours my suit. I will raise from the ground, and once more render illustrious, your ancient house—your motions shall be regulated by your wishes, even by your caprices—I will even carry my self-denial so far, that you shall, should you insist on so severe a measure, have your own residence, your own establishment, and without intrusion on my part, until the most devoted love, the most unceasing attentions, shall make way on your inflexible disposition.—All this I will consent to for the future—all that is past shall be concealed from the public.—But mine, Clara Mowbray, you must be."

"Never—never!" she said, with increasing vehemence. "I can but repeat a negative, but it shall have all the force of an oath.—Your rank is nothing to me—your fortune I scorn—my brother has no right, by the law of Scotland, or of nature, to compel my inclinations.—I detest your treachery, and I scorn the advantage you propose to attain by it.—Should the law give you my hand, it would but award you that of a corpse."

"Alas! Clara," said the Earl, "you do but flutter in the net; but I will urge you no farther now—there is another encounter before me."

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He was turning away, when Clara, springing forward, caught him by the arm, and repeated, in a low and impressive voice, the commandment,—"Thou shalt do no murder!"

"Fear not any violence," he said, softening his voice, and attempting to take her hand, "but what may flow from your own severity.—Francis is safe from me, unless you are altogether unreasonable.—Allow me but what you cannot deny to any friend of your brother, the power of seeing you at times—suspend at least the impetuosity of your dislike to me, and I will on my part modify the current of my just and otherwise uncontrollable resentment."

Clara, extricating herself, and retreating from him, only replied, "There is a Heaven above us, and THERE shall be judged our actions towards each other! You abuse a power most treacherously obtained—you break a heart that never did you wrong—you seek an alliance with a wretch who only wishes to be wedded to her grave.—If my brother brings you hither, I cannot help it—and if your coming prevents bloody and unnatural violence, it is so far well.—But by my consent you come *not*; and were the choice mine, I would rather be struck with life-long blindness, than that my eyes should again open on your person—rather that my ears were stuffed with the earth of the grave, than that they should again hear your voice!"

The Earl of Etherington smiled proudly, and replied, "Even this, madam, I can hear without resentment. Anxious and careful as you are to deprive your compliance of every grace and of every kindness, I receive the permission to wait on you, as I interpret your words."

"Do not so interpret them," she replied; "I do but submit to your presence as an unavoidable evil. Heaven be my witness, that, were it not to prevent greater and more desperate evil, I would not even so far acquiesce."

"Let acquiescence, then, be the word," he said; "and so thankful will I be, even for your acquiescence, Miss Mowbray, that all shall remain private, which I conceive you do not wish to be disclosed; and, unless absolutely compelled to it in self-defence, you may rely, no violence will be resorted to by me in any quarter.—I relieve you from my presence."

So saying, he withdrew from the apartment.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FIFTH.

EXPLANATORY.

——— By your leave, gentle wax.
SHAKESPEARE.

In the hall of Shaws Castle the Earl of Etherington met Mowbray, returned from his fruitless chase after the bearer of the anonymous epistle before recited; and who had but just learned, on his return, that the Earl of Etherington was with his sister. There was a degree of mutual confusion when they met; for Mowbray had the contents of the anonymous letter fresh in his mind, and Lord Etherington, notwithstanding all the coolness which he endeavoured to maintain, had not gone through the scene with Clara without discomposure. Mowbray asked the Earl whether he had seen his sister, and invited him, at the same time, to return to the parlour; and his lordship replied, in a tone as indifferent as he could assume, that he had enjoyed the honour of the lady's company for several minutes, and would not now intrude farther upon Miss Mowbray's patience.

"You have had such a reception as was agreeable, my lord, I trust?" said Mowbray. "I hope Clara did the honours of the house with propriety during my absence?"

"Miss Mowbray seemed a little fluttered with my sudden appearance," said the Earl; "the servant showed me in rather abruptly; and, circumstanced as we were, there is always awkwardness in a first meeting, where there is no third party to act as master of the ceremonies.—I suspect, from the lady's looks, that you have not quite kept my secret, my good friend. I myself, too, felt a little consciousness in approaching Miss Mowbray—but it is over now; and the ice being fairly broken, I hope to have other and more convenient opportunities to improve the advantage I have just gained in acquiring your lovely sister's personal acquaintance."

"So be it," said Mowbray; "but, as you declare for leaving the Castle just now, I must first speak a single word with your lordship, for which this place is not altogether convenient."

"I can have no objections, my dear Jack," said Etherington, following him with a thrill of conscious feeling, somewhat

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perhaps like that of the spider when he perceives his deceitful web is threatened with injury, and sits balanced in the centre, watching every point, and uncertain which he may be called upon first to defend. Such is one part, and not the slightest part, of the penance which never fails to wait on those, who, abandoning the "fair play of the world," endeavour to work out their purposes by a process of deception and intrigue.

"My lord," said Mowbray, when they had entered a little apartment, in which the latter kept his guns, fishing-tackle, and other implements of sport, "you have played on the square with me; nay, more—I am bound to allow you have given me great odds. I am therefore not entitled to hear any reports to the prejudice of your lordship's character, without instantly communicating them. There is an anonymous letter which I have just received. Perhaps your lordship may know the hand, and thus be enabled to detect the writer."

"I do know the hand," said the Earl, as he received the note from Mowbray; "and, allow me to say, it is the only one which could have dared to frame any calumny to my prejudice. I hope, Mr. Mowbray, it is impossible for you to consider this infamous charge as anything but a falsehood."

"My placing it in your lordship's hands, without farther inquiry, is a sufficient proof that I hold it such, my lord; at the same time that I cannot doubt for a moment that your lordship has it in your power to overthrow so frail a calumny by the most satisfactory evidence."

"Unquestionably I can, Mr. Mowbray," said the Earl; "for, besides my being in full possession of the estate and title of my father, the late Earl of Etherington, I have my father's contract of marriage, my own certificate of baptism, and the evidence of the whole country to establish my right. All these shall be produced with the least delay possible. You will not think it surprising that one does not travel with this sort of documents in one's post-chaise."

"Certainly not, my lord," said Mowbray; "it is sufficient they are forthcoming when called for. But, may I inquire, my lord, who the writer of this letter is, and whether he has any particular spleen to gratify by this very impudent assertion, which is so easily capable of being disproved?"

"He is," said Etherington, "or, at least, has the reputation of being, I am sorry to say, a near—a very near relation of my

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own—in fact, a brother by the father's side, but illegitimate.—My father was fond of him—I loved him also, for he has uncommonly fine parts, and is accounted highly accomplished. But there is a train of something irregular in his mind,—a vein, in short, of madness, which breaks out in the usual manner, rendering the poor young man a dupe to vain imaginations of his own dignity and grandeur, which is perhaps the most ordinary effect of insanity, and inspiring the deepest aversion against his nearest relatives and against myself in particular. He is a man extremely plausible, both in speech and manners; so much so, that many of my friends think there is more vice than insanity in the irregularities which he commits; but I may, I hope, be forgiven, if I have formed a milder judgment of one supposed to be my father's son. Indeed, I cannot help being sorry for poor Frank, who might have made a very distinguished figure in the world."

"May I ask the gentleman's name, my lord?" said Mowbray.

"My father's indulgence gave him our family name of Tyrrel, with his own Christian name Francis; but his proper name, to which alone he has a right, is Martigny."

"Francis Tyrrel!" exclaimed Mowbray; "why, that is the name of the very person who made some disturbance at the Well just before your lordship arrived.—You may have seen an advertisement—a sort of placard."

"I have, Mr. Mowbray," said the Earl. "Spare me on that subject, if you please—it has formed a strong reason why I did not mention my connection with this unhappy man before; but it is no unusual thing for persons, whose imaginations are excited, to rush into causeless quarrels, and then to make discreditable retreats from them."

"Or," said Mr. Mowbray, "he may have, after all, been prevented from reaching the place of rendezvous—it was that very day on which your lordship, I think, received your wound; and, if I mistake not, you hit the man from whom you got the hurt."

"Mowbray," said Lord Etherington, lowering his voice, and taking him by the arm, "it is true that I did so, and truly glad am I to observe, that, whatever might have been the consequences of such an accident, they cannot have been serious.—It struck me afterwards, that the man by whom I was so strangely assaulted had some resemblance to the unfortunate

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Tyrrel—but I had not seen him for years.—At any rate, he cannot have been much hurt, since he is now able to resume his intrigues to the prejudice of my character."

"Your lordship views the thing with a firm eye," said Mowbray; "firmer than I think most people would be able to command, who had so narrow a chance of a scrape so uncomfortable."

"Why, I am, in the first place, by no means sure that the risk existed," said the Earl of Etherington; "for, as I have often told you, I had but a very transient glimpse of the ruffian; and, in the second place, I *am* sure that no permanent bad consequences have ensued. I am too old a fox-hunter to be afraid of a leap after it is cleared, as they tell of the fellow who fainted in the morning at the sight of the precipice he had clambered over when he was drunk on the night before. The man who wrote that letter," touching it with his finger, "is alive, and able to threaten me; and if he did come to any hurt from my hand, it was in the act of attempting my life, of which I shall carry the mark to my grave."

"Nay, I am far from blaming your lordship," said Mowbray, "for what you did in self-defence, but the circumstance might have turned out very unpleasant.—May I ask what you intend to do with this unfortunate gentleman, who is in all probability in the neighbourhood?"

"I must first discover the place of his retreat," said Lord Etherington, "and then consider what is to be done, both for his safety, poor fellow, and my own. It is probable, too, that he may find sharpers to prey upon what fortune he still possesses, which, I assure you, is sufficient to attract a set of folk, who may ruin while they humour him.—May I beg that you, too, will be on the outlook, and let me know if you hear or see more of him?"

"I shall, most certainly, my lord," answered Mowbray; "but the only one of his haunts which I know, is the old Cleikum Inn, where he chose to take up his residence. He has now left it, but perhaps the old crab-fish of a landlady may know something of him."

"I will not fail to inquire," said Lord Etherington; and, with these words, he took a kind farewell of Mowbray, mounted his horse, and rode up the avenue.

"A cool fellow," said Mowbray, as he looked after him, "a

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d—d cool fellow, this brother-in-law of mine, that is to be—takes a shot at his father's son with as little remorse as at a black-cock—what would he do with me, were we to quarrel?—Well, I can snuff a candle and strike out the ace of hearts; and so, should things go wrong, he has no Jack Raw to deal with, but Jack Mowbray."

Meanwhile the Earl of Etherington hastened home to his own apartments at the Hotel; and, not entirely pleased with the events of the day, commenced a letter to his correspondent, agent, and confidant, Captain Jekyl, which we have fortunately the means of presenting to our readers:—

"FRIEND HARRY,

"THEY say a falling house is best known by the rats leaving it—a fallen state, by the desertion of confederates and allies—and a fallen man by the desertion of his friends. If this be true augury, your last letter may be considered as ominous of my breaking down. Methinks, you have gone far enough, and shared deep enough with me, to have some confidence in my *savoir faire*—some little faith both in my means and management.—What cross-grained fiend has at once inspired you with what I suppose you wish me to call politic doubts and scruples of conscience, but which I can only regard as symptoms of fear and disaffection? You can have no idea of 'duels betwixt relations so nearly connected'—and 'the affair seems very delicate and intricate'—and again, 'the matter has never been fully explained to you'—and, moreover, 'if you are expected to take an active part in the business, it must be when you are honoured with my full and unreserved confidence, otherwise, how could you be of the use to me which I might require?' Such are your expressions.

"Now, as to scruples of conscience about near relations, and so forth, all that has blown by without much mischief, and certainly is not likely to occur again—besides, did you never hear of friends quarrelling before? And are they not to exercise the usual privileges of gentlemen when they do? Moreover, how am I to know that this plaguy fellow *is* actually related to me?—They say it is a wise child knows its own father; and I cannot be expected wise enough to know to a certainty my father's son.—So much for relationship.—Then, as to full and unreserved confidence—why, Harry, this is just

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as if I were to ask you to look at a watch, and tell what it was o'clock, and you were to reply, that truly you could not inform me, because you had not examined the springs, the counterbalances, the wheels, and the whole internal machinery of the little timepiece.—But the upshot of the whole is this,—Harry Jekyl, who is as sharp a fellow as any other, thinks he has his friend Lord Etherington at a deadlock, and that he knows already so much of the said noble lord's history as to oblige his lordship to tell him the whole. And perhaps he not unreasonably concludes, that the custody of a whole secret is more creditable, and probably more lucrative, than that of a half one; and, in short, he is resolved to make the most of the cards in his hand. Another, mine honest Harry, would take the trouble to recall to your mind past times and circumstances, and conclude with expressing an humble opinion, that if Harry Jekyl were asked *now* to do any service for the noble lord aforesaid, Harry had got his reward in his pocket aforehand. But I do not argue thus, because I would rather be leagued with a friend who assists me with a view to future profit, than from respect to benefits already received. The first lies like the fox's scent when on his last legs, increasing every moment; the other is a back-scent, growing colder the longer you follow it, until at last it becomes impossible to puzzle it out. I will, therefore, submit to the circumstances, and tell you the whole story, though somewhat tedious, in hopes that I can conclude with such a trail as you will open upon breast-high.

"Thus then it was.—Francis, fifth Earl of Etherington, and my much honoured father, was what is called a very eccentric man—that is, he was neither a wise man nor a fool—had too much sense to walk into a well, and yet, in some of the furious fits which he was visited with, I have seen him quite mad enough to throw any one else into it.—Men said there was a lurking insanity—but it is an ill bird, etc., and I will say no more about it. This shatter-brained peer was, in other respects, a handsome accomplished man, with an expression somewhat haughty, yet singularly pleasing when he chose it—a man, in short, who might push his fortune with the fair sex.

"Lord Etherington, such as I have described him, being upon his travels in France, formed an attachment of the heart—ay, and some have pretended, of the hand also, with a certain beautiful orphan, Marie de Martigny. Of this union is said to

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have sprung (for I am determined not to be certain on that point) that most incommodious person, Francis Tyrrel, as he calls himself, but as I would rather call him, Francis Martigny; the latter suiting my views, as perhaps the former name agrees better with his pretensions. Now, I am too good a son to subscribe to the alleged regularity of the marriage between my right honourable and very good lord father, because my said right honourable and very good lord did, on his return to England, become wedded, in the face of the church, to my very affectionate and well-endowed mother, Ann Bulmer of Bulmer Hall, from which happy union sprang I, Francis Valentine Bulmer Tyrrel, lawful inheritor of my father and mother's joint estates, as I was the proud possessor of their ancient names. But the noble and wealthy pair, though blessed with such a pledge of love as myself, lived mighty ill together, and the rather, when my right honourable father, sending for this other Sosia, this unlucky Francis Tyrrel, senior, from France, insisted in the face of propriety, that he should reside in his house, and share, in all respects, in the opportunities of education by which the real Sosia, Francis Valentine Bulmer Tyrrel, then commonly called Lord Oakendale, hath profited in such an uncommon degree.

"Various were the matrimonial quarrels which arose between the honoured lord and lady, in consequence of this unseemly conjunction of the legitimate and illegitimate; and to these, we, the subjects of the dispute, were sometimes very properly, as well as decorously, made the witnesses. On one occasion, my right honourable mother, who was a free-spoken lady, found the language of her own rank quite inadequate to express the strength of her generous feelings, and borrowing from the vulgar two emphatic words, applied them to Marie de Martigny, and her son, Francis Tyrrel. Never did Earl that ever wore coronet fly into a pitch of more uncontrollable rage, than did my right honourable father; and, in the ardour of his reply, he adopted my mother's phraseology, to inform her, that if there *was* a whore and bastard connected with his house, it was herself and her brat.

"I was even then a sharp little fellow, and was incredibly struck with the communication, which, in an hour of uncontrollable irritation, had escaped my right honourable father. It is true, he instantly gathered himself up again; and, he

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perhaps recollecting such a word as *bigamy*, and my mother, on her side, considering the consequences of such a thing as a descent from the Countess of Etherington into Mrs. Bulmer, neither wife, maid, nor widow, there was an apparent reconciliation between them, which lasted for some time. But the speech remained deeply imprinted on my remembrance; the more so, that once, when I was exerting over my friend, Francis Tyrrel, the authority of a legitimate brother, and Lord Oakendale, old Cecil, my father's confidential valet, was so much scandalised, as to intimate a possibility that we might one day change conditions. These two accidental communications seemed to me a key to certain long lectures, with which my father used to regale us boys, but me in particular, upon the extreme mutability of human affairs,—the disappointment of the best grounded hopes and expectations,—and the necessity of being so accomplished in all useful branches of knowledge, as might, in case of accidents, supply any defalcation in our rank and fortune;—as if any art or science could make amends for the loss of an Earldom, and twelve thousand a year! All this prosing seemed to my anxious mind designed to prepare me for some unfortunate change; and when I was old enough to make such private inquiries as lay in my power, I became still more persuaded that my right honourable father nourished some thoughts of making an honest woman of Marie de Martigny, and a legitimate elder brother of Francis, after his death at least, if not during his life. I was the more convinced of this, when a little affair, which I chanced to have with the daughter of my Tu——, drew down my father's wrath upon me in great abundance, and occasioned my being banished to Scotland, along with my brother, under a very poor allowance, without introductions, except to one steady, or call it rusty, old Professor, and with the charge that I should not assume the title of Lord Oakendale, but content myself with my maternal grandfather's name of Valentine Bulmer, that of Francis Tyrrel being pre-occupied.

"Upon this occasion, notwithstanding the fear which I entertained of my father's passionate temper, I did venture to say, that since I was to resign my title, I thought I had a right to keep my family name, and that my brother might take his mother's. I wish you had seen the look of rage with which my father regarded me when I gave him this spirited hint,

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'Thou art'—he said, and paused, as if to find out the bitterest epithet to supply the blank—'thou art thy mother's child, and her perfect picture,'—(this seemed the severest reproach that occurred to him).—'Bear her name then, and bear it with patience and in secrecy; or, I here give you my word, you shall never bear another the whole days of your life.' This sealed my mouth with a witness; and then, in allusion to my flirtation with the daughter of my Tu—— aforesaid, he enlarged on the folly and iniquity of private marriages, warned me that in the country I was going to the matrimonial noose often lies hid under flowers, and that folks find it twitched round their neck when they least expect such a cravat; assured me, that he had very particular views for settling Francis and me in life, and he would forgive neither of us who should, by any such rash entanglement, render them unavailing.

"This last minatory admonition was the more tolerable, that my rival had his share of it; and so we were bundled off to Scotland, coupled up like two pointers in a dog-cart, and—I can speak for one at least—with much the same uncordial feeling towards each other. I often, indeed, detected Francis looking at me with a singular expression, as of pity and anxiety, and once or twice he seemed disposed to enter on something respecting the situation in which we stood towards each other, but I felt no desire to encourage his confidence. Meantime, as we were called, by our father's directions, not brothers, but cousins, so we came to bear towards each other the habits of companionship, though scarcely of friendship. What Francis thought, I know not; for my part, I must confess, that I lay by on the watch for some opportunity when I might mend my own situation with my father, though at the prejudice of my rival. And Fortune, while she seemed to prevent such an opportunity, involved us both in one of the strangest and most entangled mazes that her capricious divinityship ever wove, and out of which I am even now struggling, by sleight or force, to extricate myself. I can hardly help wondering, even yet, at the odd conjunction, which has produced such an intricacy of complicated incidents.

"My father was a great sportsman, and Francis and I had both inherited his taste for field-sports, but I in a keener and more ecstatic degree. Edinburgh, which is a tolerable residence in winter and spring, becomes disagreeable in summer, and in

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autumn is the most melancholy *séjour* that ever poor mortals were condemned to. No public places are open, no inhabitant of any consideration remains in the town; those who cannot get away, hide themselves in obscure corners, as if ashamed to be seen in the streets. The gentry go to their country-houses —the citizens to their sea-bathing quarters—the lawyers to their circuits—the writers to visit their country clients—and all the world to the moors to shoot grouse. We, who felt the indignity of remaining in town during this deserted season, obtained, with some difficulty, permission from the Earl to betake ourselves to any obscure corner, and shoot grouse, if we could get leave to do so on our general character of English students at the University of Edinburgh, without quoting anything more.

"The first year of our banishment we went to the neighbourhood of the Highlands; but finding our sport interrupted by gamekeepers and their gillies, on the second occasion we established ourselves at this little village of St. Ronan's, where there were then no Spa, no fine people, no card-tables, no quizzes, excepting the old quiz of a landlady with whom we lodged. We found the place much to our mind; the old landlady had interest with some old fellow, agent of a non-residing nobleman, who gave us permission to sport over his moors, of which I availed myself keenly, and Francis with more moderation. He was, indeed, of a grave musing sort of a habit, and often preferred solitary walks, in the wild and beautiful scenery with which the village is surrounded, to the use of the gun. He was attached to fishing, moreover, that dullest of human amusements, and this also tended to keep us considerably apart. This gave me rather pleasure than concern;—not that I hated Francis at that time; nay, not that I greatly disliked his society; but merely because it was unpleasant to be always with one, whose fortunes I looked upon as standing in direct opposition to my own. I also rather despised the indifference about sport, which indeed seemed to grow upon him; but my gentleman had better taste than I was aware of. If he sought no grouse on the hill, he had flushed a pheasant in the wood.

"Clara Mowbray, daughter of the Lord of the more picturesque than wealthy domain of St. Ronan's, was at that time scarce sixteen years old, and as wild and beautiful a woodland nymph as the imagination can fancy—simple as a child in all

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that concerned the world and its ways, acute as a needle in every point of knowledge which she had found an opportunity of becoming acquainted with; fearing harm from no one, and with a lively and natural strain of wit, which brought amusement and gaiety wherever she came. Her motions were under no restraint, save that of her own inclination; for her father, though a cross, peevish old man, was confined to his chair with the gout, and her only companion, a girl somewhat of inferior caste, bred up in the utmost deference to Miss Mowbray's fancies, served for company indeed in her strolls through the wild country on foot and on horseback, but never thought of interfering with her will and pleasure.

"The extreme loneliness of the country (at that time), and the simplicity of its inhabitants, seemed to render these excursions perfectly safe. Francis, happy dog, became the companion of the damsels on such occasions through the following accident. Miss Mowbray had dressed herself and her companion like country wenches, with a view to surprise the family of one of their better sort of farmers. They had accomplished their purpose greatly to their satisfaction, and were hying home after sunset, when they were encountered by a country fellow —a sort of Harry Jekyl in his way—who, being equipped with a glass or two of whisky, saw not the nobility of blood through her disguise, and accosted the daughter of a hundred sires as he would have done a ewe-milker. Miss Mowbray remonstrated —her companion screamed—up came cousin Francis with a fowling-piece on his shoulder, and soon put the sylvan to flight.

"This was the beginning of an acquaintance, which had gone great lengths before I found it out. The fair Clara, it seems, found it safer to roam in the woods with an escort than alone, and my studious and sentimental relative was almost her constant companion. At their age it was likely that some time might pass ere they came to understand each other; but full confidence and intimacy was established between them ere I heard of their amour.

"And here, Harry, I must pause till next morning, and send you the conclusion under a separate cover. The rap which I had over the elbow the other day, is still tingling at the end of my fingers, and you must not be critical with my manuscript."

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SIXTH.

LETTER CONTINUED.

——— Must I then ravel out
My weaved-up follies ?———

SHAKESPEARE.

"I RESUME my pen, Harry, to mention, without attempting to describe my surprise, that Francis, compelled by circumstances, made me the confidant of his love-intrigue. My grave cousin in love, and very much in the mind of approaching the perilous verge of clandestine marriage—he who used every now and then, not much to the improvement of our cordial regard, to lecture me upon filial duty, just upon the point of slipping the bridle himself! I could not for my life tell whether surprise, or a feeling of mischievous satisfaction, was predominant. I tried to talk to him as he used to talk to me; but I had not the gift of persuasion, or he the power of understanding the words of wisdom. He insisted our situation was different—that his unhappy birth, as he termed it, freed him at least from dependence on his father's absolute will—that he had, by bequest from some relative of his mother, a moderate competence, which Miss Mowbray had consented to share with him; in fine, that he desired not my counsel but my assistance. A moment's consideration convinced me, that I should be unkind, not to him only but to myself, unless I gave him all the backing I could in this his most dutiful scheme. I recollected our right honourable father's denunciations against Scottish marriages, and secret marriages of all sorts,—denunciations perhaps not the less vehement that he might feel some secret prick of conscience on the subject himself. I remembered that my grave brother had always been a favourite, and I forgot not—how was it possible I could forget?—those ominous expressions, which intimated a possibility of the hereditary estate and honours being transferred to the elder, instead of the younger son. Now, it required no conjurer to foresee, that should Francis commit this inexpiable crime of secretly allying himself with a Scottish beauty, our sire would lose all wish to accomplish such a transference in his favour; and while my brother's merits were alto-

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gether obscured by such an unpardonable act of disobedience, my own, no longer overshadowed by prejudice or partiality, would shine forth in all their natural brilliancy. These considerations, which flashed on me with the rapidity of lightning, induced me to consent to hold Frank's back-hand, during the perilous game he proposed to play. I had only to take care that my own share in the matter should not be so prominent as to attract my father's attention; and this I was little afraid of, for his wrath was usually of that vehement and forcible character, which, like lightning, is attracted to one single point, there bursting with violence, as undivided as it was uncontrollable.

"I soon found the lovers needed my assistance more than I could have supposed; for they were absolute novices in any sort of intrigue, which to me seemed as easy and natural as lying. Francis had been detected by some tattling spy in his walks with Clara, and the news had been carried to old Mowbray, who was greatly incensed at his daughter, though little knowing that her crime was greater than admitting an unknown English student to form a personal acquaintance with her. He prohibited farther intercourse—resolved, in justice-of-peace phrase, to rid the country of us; and, prudently sinking all mention of his daughter's delinquency, commenced an action against Francis, under pretext of punishing him as an encroacher upon his game, but in reality to scare him from the neighbourhood. His person was particularly described to all the keepers and satellites about Shaws Castle, and any personal intercourse betwixt him and Clara became impossible, except under the most desperate risks. Nay, such was their alarm, that Master Francis thought it prudent, for Miss Mowbray's sake, to withdraw as far as a town called Marchthorn, and there to conceal himself, maintaining his intercourse with Clara only by letter.

"It was then I became the sheet-anchor of the hope of the lovers; it was then my early dexterity and powers of contrivance were first put to the test; and it would be too long to tell you in how many shapes, and by how many contrivances, I acted as agent, letter-carrier, and go-between, to maintain the intercourse of these separated turtles. I have had a good deal of trouble in that way on my own account, but never half so much as I took on account of this brace of lovers. I scaled walls and swam rivers, set blood-hounds, quarter-staves, and

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blunderbusses at defiance; and excepting the distant prospect of self-interest which I have hinted at, I was neither to have honour nor reward for my pains. I will own to you that Clara Mowbray was so very beautiful—so absolutely confiding in her lover's friend—and thrown into such close intercourse with me, that there were times when I thought that, in conscience, she ought not to have scrupled to have contributed a mite to reward the faithful labourer. But then she looked like purity itself; and I was such a novice at that time of day, that I did not know how it might have been possible for me to retreat, if I had made too bold an advance—and, in short, I thought it best to content myself with assisting true love to run smooth, in the hope that its course would assure me, in the long-run, an Earl's title, and an Earl's fortune.

"Nothing was, therefore, ventured on my part which could raise suspicion, and, as the confidential friend of the lovers, I prepared everything for their secret marriage. The pastor of the parish agreed to perform the ceremony, prevailed upon by an argument which I used to him, and which Clara, had she guessed it, would have little thanked me for. I led the honest man to believe, that, in declining to do his office, he might prevent a too successful lover from doing justice to a betrayed maiden; and the parson, who, I found, had a spice of romance in his disposition, resolved, under such pressing circumstances, to do them the kind office of binding them together, although the consequence might be a charge of irregularity against himself. Old Mowbray was much confined to his room, his daughter less watched since Frank had removed from the neighbourhood—the brother (which, by the by, I should have said before) not then in the country—and it was settled that the lovers should meet at the Old Kirk of St. Ronan's, when the twilight became deep, and go off in a chaise for England so soon as the ceremony was performed.

"When all this was arranged save the actual appointment of the day, you cannot conceive the happiness and the gratitude of my sage brother. He looked upon himself as approaching to the seventh heaven, instead of losing his chance of a good fortune, and encumbering himself at nineteen with a wife, and all the probabilities of narrow circumstances, and an increasing family. Though so much younger myself, I could not help wondering at his extreme want of knowledge of the world, and

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feeling ashamed that I had ever allowed him to take the airs of a tutor with me; and this conscious superiority supported me against the thrill of jealousy which always seized me when I thought of his carrying off the beautiful prize, which, without my address, he could never have made his own.—But at this important crisis, I had a letter from my father, which, by some accident, had long lain at our lodgings in Edinburgh—had then visited our former quarters in the Highlands—again returned to Edinburgh—and at length reached me at Marchthorn in a most critical time.

"It was in reply to a letter of mine, in which, among other matters, such as good boys send to their papas, descriptions of the country, accounts of studies, exercises, and so forth, I had, to fill up the sheet to a dutiful length, thrown in something about the family of St. Ronan's, in the neighbourhood of which I was writing. I had no idea what an effect the name would produce on the mind of my right honourable father, but his letter sufficiently expressed it. He charged me to cultivate the acquaintance of Mr. Mowbray as fast and as intimately as possible; and, if need were, to inform him candidly of our real character and situation in life. Wisely considering, at the same time, that his filial admonition might be neglected if not backed by some sufficient motive, his lordship frankly let me into the secret of my grand-uncle by the mother's side, Mr. S. Mowbray of Nettlewood's last will and testament, by which I saw, to my astonishment and alarm, that a large and fair estate was bequeathed to the eldest son and heir of the Earl of Etherington, on condition of his forming a matrimonial alliance with a lady of the house of Mowbray of St. Ronan's.—Mercy of Heaven! how I stared! Here had I been making every preparation for wedding Francis to the very girl, whose hand would insure to myself wealth and independence!—And even the first loss, though great, was not likely to be the last. My father spoke of the marriage like a land-surveyor, but of the estate of Nettlewood like an impassioned lover. He seemed to dote on every acre of it, and dwelt on its contiguity to his own domains as a circumstance which rendered the union of the estates not desirable merely, but constituted an arrangement pointed out by the hand of nature. And although he observed, that, on account of the youth of the parties, a treaty of marriage could not be immediately undertaken, it was yet clear he would ap-

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prove at heart of any bold stroke which would abolish the interval of time that might otherwise intervene, ere Oakendale and Nettlewood became one property.

"Here, then, were shipwrecked my fair hopes. It was clear as sunshine, that a private marriage, unpardonable in the abstract, would become venial, nay, highly laudable, in my father's eyes, if it united his heir with Clara Mowbray; and if he really had, as my fears suggested, the means of establishing legitimacy on my brother's part, nothing was so likely to tempt him to use them, as the certainty that, by his doing so, Nettlewood and Oakendale would be united into one. The very catastrophe which I had prepared, as sure to exclude my rival from his father's favour, was thus likely, unless it could be prevented, to become a strong motive and argument for the Earl placing his rights above mine.

"I shut myself up in my bedroom, locked the door, read and again read my father's letter, and, instead of giving way to idle passion (beware of that, Harry, even in the most desperate circumstances), I considered, with keen investigation, whether some remedy could not yet be found.—To break off the match for the time would have been easy—a little private information to Mr. Mowbray would have done that with a vengeance—but then the treaty might be renewed under my father's auspices; —at all events, the share which I had taken in the intrigue between Clara and my brother, rendered it almost impossible for me to become a suitor in my own person.—Amid these perplexities, it suddenly occurred to my adventurous heart and contriving brain—what if I should personate the bridegroom?—This strange thought, you will recollect, occurred to a very youthful brain—it was banished—it returned—returned again and again—was viewed under every different shape—became familiar—was adopted—It was easy to fix the appointment with Clara and the clergyman, for I managed the whole correspondence—the resemblance between Francis and me in stature and in proportion—the disguise which we were to assume—the darkness of the church—the hurry of the moment—might, I trusted, prevent Clara from recognising me. To the minister I had only to say, that, though I had hitherto talked of a friend, I myself was the happy man. My first name was Francis as well as his; and I had found Clara so gentle, so confiding, so flatteringly cordial in her intercourse with me, that,

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once within my power, and prevented from receding by shame and a thousand contradictory feelings, I had, with the vanity of an *amoureux de seize ans*, the confidence to believe I could reconcile the fair lady to the exchange.

"There certainly never came such a thought into a madcap's brain; and, what is more extraordinary—but that you already know—it was so far successful, that the marriage ceremony was performed between us in the presence of a servant of mine, her accommodating companion, and the priest.—We got into the carriage, and were a mile from the church, when my unlucky or lucky brother stopped the chaise by force—through what means he had obtained knowledge of my little trick, I never have been able to learn. Solmes has been faithful to me in too many instances, that I should suspect him in this important crisis. I jumped out of the carriage, pitched fraternity to the devil, and, betwixt desperation and something very like shame, began to cut away with a couteau de chasse, which I had provided in case of necessity.—All was in vain—I was hustled down under the wheel of the carriage, and, the horses taking fright, it went over my body.

"Here ends my narrative; for I neither heard nor saw more until I found myself stretched on a sick-bed many miles from the scene of action, and Solmes engaged in attending on me. In answer to my passionate inquiries, he briefly informed me that Master Francis had sent back the young lady to her own dwelling, and that she appeared to be extremely ill in consequence of the alarm she had sustained. My own health, he assured me, was considered as very precarious, and added, that Tyrrel, who was in the same house, was in the utmost perturbation on my account. The very mention of his name brought on a crisis in which I brought up much blood; and it is singular that the physician who attended me—a grave gentleman, with a wig—considered that this was of service to me. I know it frightened me heartily, and prepared me for a visit from Master Frank, which I endured with a tameness he would not have experienced, had the usual current of blood flowed in my veins. But sickness and the lancet make one very tolerant of sermonising.—At last, in consideration of being relieved from his accursed presence, and the sound of his infernally calm voice, I slowly and reluctantly acquiesced in an arrangement, by which he proposed that we should for ever bid adieu to each

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other, and to Clara Mowbray. I would have hesitated at this last stipulation. 'She was,' I said, 'my wife, and I was entitled to claim her as such.'

"This drew down a shower of most moral reproaches, and an assurance that Clara disowned and detested my alliance, and that where there had been an essential error in the person, the mere ceremony could never be accounted binding by the law of any Christian country. I wonder this had not occurred to me; but my ideas of marriage were much founded on plays and novels, where such devices as I had practised are often resorted to for winding up the plot, without any hint of their illegality; besides, I had confided, as I mentioned before, a little too rashly perhaps, in my own powers of persuading so young a bride as Clara to be contented with one handsome fellow instead of another.

"Solmes took up the argument, when Francis released me by leaving the room. He spoke of my father's resentment, should this enterprise reach his ears—of the revenge of Mowbray of St. Ronan's, whose nature was both haughty and rugged—of risk from the laws of the country, and God knows what bugbears besides, which at a more advanced age I would have laughed at. In a word, I sealed the capitulation, vowed perpetual absence, and banished myself, as they say in this country, forth of Scotland.

"And here, Harry, observe and respect my genius. Every circumstance was against me in this negotiation. I had been the aggressor in the war; I was wounded, and, it might be said, a prisoner in my antagonist's hands; yet I could so far avail myself of Monsieur Martigny's greater eagerness for peace, that I clogged the treaty with a condition highly advantageous to myself, and equally unfavourable to him.—Said Mr. Francis Martigny was to take upon himself the burden of my right honourable father's displeasure; and our separation, which was certain to give immense offence, was to be represented as his work, not as mine. I insisted, tender-hearted, dutiful soul, as I was, that I would consent to no measure which was to bring down papa's displeasure, this was a *sine qua non* in our negotiation.

'Voila ce que c'est d'avoir des talens.'

"Monsieur Francis would, I suppose, have taken the world

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on his shoulders, to have placed an eternal separation betwixt his turtledove and the falcon who had made so bold a pounce at her.—What he wrote to my father I know not; as for myself, in all duty, I represented the bad state of my health from an accident, and that my brother and companion having been suddenly called from me by some cause which he had not explained, I had thought it necessary to get to London for the best advice, and only waited his lordship's permission to return to the paternal mansion. This I soon received, and found, as I expected, that he was in towering wrath against my brother for his disobedience; and, after some time, I even had reason to think (as, how could it be otherwise, Harry?), that, on becoming better acquainted with the merits and amiable manners of his apparent heir, he lost any desire which he might formerly have entertained, of accomplishing any change in my circumstances in relation to the world. Perhaps the old peer turned a little ashamed of his own conduct, and dared not aver to the congregation of the righteous (for he became saintly in his latter days), the very pretty frolics which he seems to have been guilty of in his youth. Perhaps, also, the death of my right honourable mother operated in my favour, since, while she lived, my chance was the worse—there is no saying what a man will do to spite his wife.—Enough, he died—slept with his right honourable fathers, and I became, without opposition, Right Honourable in his stead.

"How I have borne my new honours, thou, Harry, and our merry set know full well. Newmarket and Tattersall's may tell the rest.—I think I have been as lucky as most men where luck is most prized, and so I shall say no more on that subject.

"And now, Harry, I will suppose thee in a moralising mood; that is, I will fancy the dice have run wrong—or your double-barrel has hung fire—or a certain lady has looked cross—or any such weighty cause of gravity has occurred, and you give me the benefit of your seriousness.—'My dear Etherington,' say you pithily, 'you are a precious fool!—Here you are stirring up a business rather scandalous in itself, and fraught with mischief to all concerned—a business which might sleep for ever, if you let it alone, but which is sure, like a sea-coal fire, to burst into a flame if you go on poking it. I would like to ask your lordship only two questions,'—say you with your usual graceful attitude of adjusting your perpendicular shirt-

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collar, and passing your hand over the knot of your cravat, which deserves a peculiar place in the *Tietania*—'only two questions—that is, whether you do not repent the past, and whether you do not fear the future?' Very comprehensive queries these of yours, Harry; for they respect both the time past and the time to come—one's whole life, in short. However, I shall endeavour to answer them as well as I may.

"Repent the past, said you?—Yes, Harry, I think I do repent the past—that is, not quite in the parson's style of repentance, which resembles yours when you have a headache, but as I would repent a hand at cards which I had played on false principles. I should have begun with the young lady—availed myself in a very different manner of Monsieur Martigny's absence, and my own intimacy with her, and thus superseded him, if possible, in the damsel's affections. The scheme I adopted, though there was, I think, both boldness and dexterity in it, was that of a novice of premature genius, who could not calculate chances. So much for repentance.—Do I not fear the future?—Harry, I will not cut your throat for supposing you to have put the question, but calmly assure you, that I never feared anything in my life. I was born without the sensation, I believe; at least it is perfectly unknown to me. When I felt that cursed wheel pass across my breast, when I felt the pistol-ball benumb my arm, I felt no more agitation than at the bounce of a champagne-cork. But I would not have you think that I am fool enough to risk plague, trouble, and danger (all of which, besides considerable expense, I am now prepared to encounter), without some adequate motive,—and here it is.

"From various quarters, hints, rumours, and surmises have reached me, that an attack will be made on my rank and status in society, which can only be in behalf of this fellow Martigny (for I will not call him by his stolen name of Tyrrel). Now, this I hold to be a breach of the paction betwixt us, by which—that is, by that which I am determined to esteem its true meaning and purport—he was to leave my right honourable father and me to settle our own matters without his interference, which amounted to a virtual resignation of his rights, if the scoundrel ever had any. Can he expect I am to resign my wife, and what is a better thing, old Scrogie Mowbray's estate of Nettlewood, to gratify the humour of a fellow who

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sets up claims to my title and whole property? No, by ——! If he assails me in a point so important, I will retaliate upon him in one where he will feel as keenly; and that he may depend upon.—And now, methinks, you come upon me with a second edition of your grave remonstrances, about family feuds, unnatural rencontres, offence to all the feelings of all the world, et cætera, et cætera, which you might usher in most delectably with the old stave about brethren dwelling together in unity. I will not stop to inquire whether all these delicate apprehensions are on account of the Earl of Etherington, his safety, and his reputation; or whether my friend Harry Jekyl be not considering how far his own interference with such a naughty business will be well taken at head-quarters; and so, without pausing on that question, I shall barely and briefly say, that you cannot be more sensible than I am of the madness of bringing matters to such an extremity—I have no such intention, I assure you, and it is with no such purpose that I invite you here.—Were I to challenge Martigny, he would refuse me the meeting; and all less ceremonious ways of arranging such an affair are quite old-fashioned.

"It is true at our first meeting I was betrayed into the scrape I told you of—just as you may have shot (or shot *at*, for I think you are no downright hitter) a hen-pheasant, when flushed within distance, by a sort of instinctive movement, without reflecting on the enormity you were about to commit. The truth is, there is an ignis fatuus influence, which seems to govern our house—it poured its wildfire through my father's veins—it has descended to me in full vigour, and every now and then its impulse is irresistible. There was my enemy, and here were my pistols, was all I had time to think about the matter. But I will be on my guard in future, the more surely, as I cannot receive any provocation from him; on the contrary, if I must confess the truth, though I was willing to gloss it a little in my first account of the matter (like the Gazette, when recording a defeat), I am certain he would never voluntarily have fired at me, and that his pistol went off as he fell. You know me well enough to be assured, that I will never be again in the scrape of attacking an unresisting antagonist, were he ten times my brother.

"Then, as to this long tirade about hating my brother—Harry, I do not hate him more than the first-born of Egypt

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are in general hated by those whom they exclude from entailed estates, and so forth—not one landed man in twenty of us that is not hated by his younger brothers, to the extent of wishing him quiet in his grave, as an abominable stumbling-block in their path of life; and so far only do I hate Monsieur Martigny. But for the rest, I rather like him as otherwise; and would he but die would give my frank consent to his being canonised; and while he lives, I am not desirous that he should be exposed to any temptation from rank and riches, those main obstacles to the self-denying course of life, by which the odour of sanctity is attained.

"Here again you break in with your impertinent queries—If I have no purpose of quarrelling personally with Martigny, why do I come into collision with him at all?—why not abide by the treaty of Marchthorn, and remain in England, without again approaching St. Ronan's, or claiming my maiden bride?

"Have I not told you, I want him to cease all threatened attempts upon my fortune and dignity? Have I not told you that I want to claim my wife, Clara Mowbray, and my estate of Nettlewood, fairly won by marrying her?—And, to let you into the whole secret, though Clara is a very pretty woman, yet she goes for so little in the transaction with me, her unimpassioned bridegroom, that I hope to make some relaxation of my rights over her the means of obtaining the concessions which I think most important.

"I will not deny, that an aversion to awakening bustle, and encountering reproach, has made me so slow in looking after my interest, that the period will shortly expire, within which I ought, by old Scrog Mowbray's will, to qualify myself for becoming his heir, by being the accepted husband of Miss Mowbray of St. Ronan's. Time was—time is—and if I catch it not by the forelock as it passes, time will be no more—Nettlewood will be forfeited—and if I have in addition a lawsuit for my title, and for Oakendale, I run a risk of being altogether capoted. I must, therefore, act at all risks, and act with vigour—and this is the general plan of my campaign, subject always to be altered according to circumstances. I have obtained—I may say purchased—Mowbray's consent to address his sister. I have this advantage, that if she agrees to take me, she will for ever put a stop to all disagreeable reports and recollections, founded on her former conduct. In

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that case I secure the Nettlewood property, and am ready to wage war for my paternal estate. Indeed, I firmly believe, that should this happy consummation take place, Monsieur Martigny will be too much heart-broken to make farther fight, but will e'en throw helve after hatchet, and run to hide himself, after the fashion of a true lover, in some desert beyond seas.

"But, supposing the lady has the bad taste to be obstinate, and will none of me, I still think that her happiness, or her peace of mind, will be as dear to Martigny, as Gibraltar is to the Spaniards, and that he will sacrifice a great deal to induce me to give up my pretensions. Now, I shall want some one to act as my agent in communicating with this fellow; for I will not deny that my old appetite for cutting his throat may awaken suddenly, were I to hold personal intercourse with him. Come thou, therefore, without delay, and hold my backhand—Come, for you know me, and that I never left a kindness unrewarded. To be specific, you shall have means to pay off a certain inconvenient mortgage, without troubling the tribe of Issachar, if you will but be true to me in this matter—Come, therefore, without farther apologies or farther delay. There shall, I give you my word, neither be risk nor offence in the part of the drama which I intend to commit to your charge.

"Talking of the drama, we had a miserable attempt at a sort of bastard theatricals, at Mowbray's rat-gnawed mansion. There were two things worth noticing—One, that I lost all the courage on which I pique myself, and fairly fled from the pit, rather than present myself before Miss Clara Mowbray, when it came to the push. And upon this I pray you to remark, that I am a person of singular delicacy and modesty, instead of being the Drawcansir and Daredevil that you would make of me. The other memorable is of a more delicate nature, respecting the conduct of a certain fair lady, who seemed determined to fling herself at my head. There is a wonderful degree of free-masonry among us folk of spirit; and it is astonishing how soon we can place ourselves on a footing with neglected wives and discontented daughters. If you come not soon, one of the rewards held out to you in my former letter will certainly not be forthcoming. No schoolboy keeps gingerbread for his comrade without feeling a desire to nibble at it; so, if you appear not to look after your own interest, say you had fair

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warning. For my own part, I am rather embarrassed than gratified by the prospect of such an affair, when I have on the tapis another of a different nature. This enigma I will explain at meeting.

"Thus finishes my long communication. If my motives of action do not appear explicit, think in what a maze fortune has involved me, and how much must necessarily depend on the chapter of accidents.

"Yesterday I may be said to have opened my siege, for I presented myself before Clara. I had no very flattering reception—that was of little consequence, for I did not expect one. By alarming her fears, I made an impression thus far, that she acquiesces in my appearing before her as her brother's guest, and this is no small point gained. She will become accustomed to look on me, and will remember with less bitterness the trick which I played her formerly; while I, on the other hand, by a similar force of habit, will get over certain awkward feelings with which I have been compunctiously visited whenever I look upon her.—Adieu! Health and brotherhood.

"Thine,

"ETHERINGTON."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVENTH.

THE REPLY.

Thou bear'st a precious burden, gentle post,
Nitre and sulphur—See that it explode not.

OLD PLAY.

"I HAVE received your two long letters, my dear Etherington, with equal surprise and interest; for what I knew of your Scottish adventures before, was by no means sufficient to prepare me for a statement so perversely complicated. The Ignis Fatuus which, you say, governed your father, seems to have ruled the fortunes of your whole house, there is so much eccentricity in all that you have told me. But *n'importe*, Etherington, you were my friend—you held me up when I was completely broken down; and, whatever you may think, my

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services are at your command, much more from reflections on the past, than hopes for the future. I am no speech-maker, but this you may rely on while I continue to be Harry Jekyl. You have deserved some love at my hands, Etherington, and you have it.

"Perhaps I love you the better since your perplexities have become known to me; for, my dear Etherington, you were before too much an object of envy to be entirely an object of affection. What a happy fellow! was the song of all who named your rank, and a fortune to maintain it—luck sufficient to repair all the waste that you could make in your income, and skill to back that luck, or supply it, should it for a moment fail you.—The cards turning up as if to your wish—the dice rolling, it almost seemed, at your wink—it was rather your look than the touch of your cue that sent the ball into the pocket. You seemed to have fortune in chains, and a man of less honour would have been almost suspected of helping his luck by a little art.—You won every bet; and the instant that you were interested, one might have named the winning horse—it was always that which you were to gain most by.—You never held out your piece but the game went down—and then the women!—with face, manners, person, and, above all, your tongue—what wild work have you made among them!—Good heaven! and have you had the old sword hanging over your head by a horsehair all this while?—Has your rank been doubtful?—Your fortune unsettled?—And your luck, so constant in everything else, has that, as well as your predominant influence with the women, failed you, when you wished to form a connection for life, and when the care of your fortune required you to do so?—Etherington, I am astonished!—The Mowbray scrape I always thought an inconvenient one, as well as the quarrel with this same Tyrrel, or Martigny; but I was far from guessing the complicated nature of your perplexities.

"But I must not run on in a manner which, though it relieves my own marvelling mind, cannot be very pleasant to you. Enough, I look on my obligations to you as more light to be borne, now I have some chance of repaying them to a certain extent; but, even were the full debt paid, I would remain as much attached to you as ever. It is your friend who speaks, Etherington; and, if he offers his advice in somewhat plain language, do not, I entreat you, suppose that your confi-

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dence has encouraged an offensive familiarity, but consider me as one who, in a weighty matter, writes plainly, to avoid the least chance of misconstruction.

"Etherington, your conduct hitherto has resembled anything rather than the coolness and judgment which are so peculiarly your own when you choose to display them. I pass over the masquerade of your marriage—it was a boy's trick, which could hardly have availed you much, even if successful; for what sort of a wife would you have acquired, had this same Clara Mowbray proved willing to have accepted the change which you had put upon her, and transferred herself, without repugnance, from one bridegroom to another?—Poor as I am, I know that neither Nettlewood nor Oakendale should have bribed me to marry such a ——. I cannot decorously fill up the blank.

"Neither, my dear Etherington, can I forgive you the trick you put on the clergyman, in whose eyes you destroyed the poor girl's character to induce him to consent to perform the ceremony, and have thereby perhaps fixed an indelible stain on her for life—this was not a fair *ruse de guerre*.—As it is, you have taken little by your stratagem—unless, indeed, it should be difficult for the young lady to prove the imposition put upon her—for that being admitted, the marriage certainly goes for nothing. At least, the only use you can make of it would be to drive her into a more formal union, for fear of having this whole unpleasant discussion brought into a court of law; and in this, with all the advantages you possess, joined to your own arts of persuasion, and her brother's influence, I should think you very likely to succeed. All women are necessarily the slaves of their reputation. I have known some who have given up their virtue to preserve their character, which is, after all, only the shadow of it. I therefore would not conceive it difficult for Clara Mowbray to persuade herself to become a countess, rather than be the topic of conversation for all Britain, while a lawsuit betwixt you is in dependence; and that maybe for the greater part of both your lives.

"But, in Miss Mowbray's state of mind, it may require time to bring her to such a conclusion; and I fear you will be thwarted in your operations by your rival—I will not offend you by calling him your brother. Now, it is here that I think with pleasure I may be of some use to you,—under this special condition, that there shall be no thoughts of farther violence

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taking place between you. However you may have smoothed over your rencontre to yourself, there is no doubt that the public would have regarded any accident which might have befallen on that occasion, as a crime of the deepest dye, and that the law would have followed it with the most severe punishment. And for all that I have said of my serviceable disposition, I would fain stop short on this side of the gallows—my neck is too long already. Without a jest, Etherington, you must be ruled by counsel in this matter. I detect your hatred to this man in every line of your letter, even when you write with the greatest coolness; even where there is an affectation of gaiety, I read your sentiments on this subject; and they are such as—I will not preach to you—I will not say a good man—but such as every wise man—every man who wishes to live on fair terms with the world, and to escape general malediction, and perhaps a violent death, where all men will clap their hands and rejoice at the punishment of the fratricide—would, with all possible speed, eradicate from his breast. My services, therefore, if they are worth your acceptance, are offered, on the condition that this unholy hatred be subdued with the utmost force of your powerful mind, and that you avoid everything which can possibly lead to such a catastrophe as you have twice narrowly escaped. I do not ask you to like this man, for I know well the deep root which your prejudices hold in your mind; I merely ask you to avoid him, and to think of him as one who, if you do meet him, can never be the object of personal resentment.

"On these conditions I will instantly join you at your Spa, and wait but your answer to throw myself into the post-chaise. I will seek out this Martigny for you, and I have the vanity to think I shall be able to persuade him to take the course which his own true interest, as well as yours, so plainly points out—and that is to depart and make us free of him. You must not grudge a round sum of money, should that prove necessary—we must make wings for him to fly with, and I must be empowered by you to that purpose. I cannot think you have anything serious to fear from a lawsuit. Your father threw out this sinister hint at a moment when he was enraged at his wife, and irritated by his son; and I have little doubt that his expressions were merely flashes of anger at the moment, though I see they have made a deep impression on you. At

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all events, he spoke of a preference to his illegitimate son, as something which it was in his own power to give or to withhold; and he has died without bestowing it. The family seem addicted to irregular matrimony, and some left-handed marriage there may have been used to propitiate the modesty, and save the conscience, of the French lady; but that anything of the nature of a serious and legal ceremony took place, nothing but the strongest proof can make me believe.

"I repeat, then, that I have little doubt that the claims of Martigny, whatever they are, may be easily compounded, and England made clear of him. This will be more easily done, if he really entertains such a romantic passion, as you describe, for Miss Clara Mowbray. It would be easy to show him that, whether she is disposed to accept your lordship's hand or not, her quiet and peace of mind must depend on his leaving the country. Rely on it I shall find out the way to smooth him down, and whether distance or the grave divide Martigny and you, is very little to the purpose, unless in so far as the one point can be attained with honour and safety, and the other, if attempted, would only make all concerned the subject of general execration and deserved punishment.—Speak the word, and I attend you, as your truly grateful and devoted

"HENRY JEKYL."

To this admonitory epistle, the writer received, in the course of post, the following answer:—

"My truly grateful and devoted Henry Jekyl has adopted a tone which seems to be exalted without any occasion. Why, thou suspicious monitor, have I not repeated a hundred times that I repent sincerely of the foolish rencontre, and am determined to curb my temper and be on my guard in future—And what need you come upon me, with your long lesson about execration, and punishment, and fratricide, and so forth?—You deal with an argument as a boy does with the first hare he shoots, which he never thinks dead till he has fired the second barrel into her. What a fellow you would have been for a lawyer! how long you would have held forth upon the plainest cause, until the poor bothered judge was almost willing to decide against justice, that he might be revenged on you. If I must repeat what I have said twenty times, I tell you I have

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no thoughts of proceeding with this fellow as I would with another. If my father's blood be in his veins, it shall save the skin his mother gave him. And so come without more parade, either of stipulation or argument. Thou art, indeed, a curious animal! One would think, to read your communication, that you had yourself discovered the propriety of acting as a negotiator, and the reasons which might, in the course of such a treaty, be urged with advantage to induce this fellow to leave the country—Why, this is the very course chalked out in my last letter! You are bolder than the boldest gipsy, for you not only steal my ideas, and disfigure them, that they may pass for yours, but you have the assurance to come a-begging with them to the door of the original parent! No man like you for stealing other men's inventions, and cooking them up in your own way. However, Harry, bating a little self-conceit and assumption, thou art as honest a fellow as ever man put faith in—clever, too, in your own style, though not quite the genius you would fain pass for.—Come on thine own terms, and come as speedily as thou canst. I do not reckon the promise I made the less binding, that you very generously make no allusion to it.

"Thine,

"ETHERINGTON.

"P.S.—One single caution I must add—do not mention my name to any one at Harrowgate, or your prospect of meeting me, or the route which you are about to take. On the purpose of your journey, it is unnecessary to recommend silence. I know not whether such doubts are natural to all who have secret measures to pursue, or whether nature has given me an unusual share of anxious suspicion; but I cannot divest myself of the idea, that I am closely watched by some one whom I cannot discover. Although I concealed my purpose of coming hither from all mankind but you, whom I do not for an instant suspect of babbling, yet it was known to this Martigny, and he is down here before me. Again, I said not a word—gave not a hint to any one of my views towards Clara, yet the tattling people here had spread a report of a marriage depending between us, even before I could make the motion to her brother. To be sure, in such society there is nothing talked of but marrying and giving in marriage; and this, which alarms me, as connected with my own private purposes, may be a bare rumour, arising

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out of the gossip of the place—Yet I feel like the poor woman in the old story, who felt herself watched by an eye that glared upon her from behind the tapestry.

"I should have told you in my last, that I had been recognised at a public entertainment, by the old clergyman who pronounced the matrimonial blessing on Clara and me nearly eight years ago. He insisted upon addressing me by the name of Valentine Bulmer, under which I was then best known. It did not suit me at present to put him into my confidence, so I cut him, Harry, as I would an old pencil. The task was the less difficult, that I had to do with one of the most absent men that ever dreamed with his eyes open. I verily believe he might be persuaded that the whole transaction was a vision, and that he had never in reality seen me before. Your pious rebuke, therefore, about what I told him formerly concerning the lovers is quite thrown away. After all, if what I said was not accurately true, as I certainly believe it was an exaggeration, it was all Saint Francis of Martigny's fault, I suppose. I am sure he had love and opportunity on his side.

"Here you have a postscript, Harry, longer than the letter, but it must conclude with the same burden—Come, and come quickly."

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHTH.

THE FRIGHT.

As shakes the bough of trembling leaf,
When sudden whirlwinds rise;
As stands aghast the warrior chief,
When his base army flies.

* * * *

It had been settled by all who took the matter into consideration, that the fidgety, fiery old Nabob would soon quarrel with his landlady, Mrs. Dods, and become impatient of his residence at St. Ronan's. A man so kind to himself, and so inquisitive about the affairs of others, could have, it was supposed, a limited sphere for gratification either of his tastes or of his curiosity, in the Aultoun of St. Ronan's; and many a

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time the precise day and hour of his departure were fixed by the idlers at the Spa. But still old Touchwood appeared amongst them, when the weather permitted, with his nut-brown visage, his throat carefully wrapped up in an immense Indian kerchief, and his gold-headed cane, which he never failed to carry over his shoulder; his short, but stout limbs, and his active step, showed plainly that he bore it rather as a badge of dignity than a means of support. There he stood, answering shortly and gruffly to all questions proposed to him, and making his remarks aloud upon the company, with great indifference as to the offence which might be taken; and as soon as the ancient priestess had handed him his glass of the salutiferous water, turned on his heel with a brief good-morning, and either marched back to hide himself in the Manse, with his crony, Mr. Cargill, or to engage in some hobbyhorsical pursuit connected with his neighbours in the Aultoun.

The truth was, that the honest gentleman having, so far as Mrs. Dods would permit, put matters to rights within her residence, wisely abstained from pushing his innovations any farther, aware that it is not every stone which is capable of receiving the last degree of polish. He next set himself about putting Mr. Cargill's house into order; and, without leave asked or given by that reverend gentleman, he actually accomplished as wonderful a reformation in the Manse, as could have been effected by a benevolent Brownie. The floors were sometimes swept—the carpets were sometimes shaken—the plates and dishes were cleaner—there was tea and sugar in the tea-chest, and a joint of meat at proper times was to be found in the larder. The elder maid-servant wore a good stuff gown—the younger snooded up her hair, and now went about the house a damsel so trig and neat, that some said she was too handsome for the service of a bachelor divine; and others, that they saw no business so old a fool as the Nabob had to be meddling with the lassie's busking. But for such evil bruits Mr. Touchwood cared not, even if he happened to hear of them, which was very doubtful. Add to all these changes, that the garden was weeded, and the glebe was regularly laboured.

The talisman by which all this desirable alteration was wrought, consisted partly in small presents, partly in constant attention. The liberality of the singular old gentleman gave him a perfect right to scold when he saw things wrong; the

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domestics, who had fallen into total sloth and indifference, began to exert themselves under Mr. Touchwood's new system of rewards and surveillance; and the minister, half unconscious of the cause, reaped the advantage of the exertions of his busy friend. Sometimes he lifted his head, when he heard workmen thumping and bouncing in the neighbourhood of his study, and demanded the meaning of the clatter which annoyed him; but on receiving for answer that it was by order of Mr. Touchwood, he resumed his labours, under the persuasion that all was well.

But even the Augean task of putting the Manse in order did not satisfy the gigantic activity of Mr. Touchwood. He aspired to universal dominion in the Aultoun of St. Ronan's; and, like most men of an ardent temper, he contrived, in a great measure, to possess himself of the authority he longed after. Then was there war waged by him with all the petty but perpetual nuisances, which infest a Scottish town of the old stamp—then was the hereditary dunghill, which had reeked before the window of the cottage for fourscore years, transported behind the house—then was the broken wheelbarrow, or unserviceable cart, removed out of the footpath—the old hat, or blue petticoat, taken from the window into which it had been stuffed, "to expel the winter's flaw," was consigned to the gutter, and its place supplied by good perspicuous glass. The means by which such reformation was effected, were the same as resorted to in the Manse—money and admonition. The latter given alone would have met little attention—perhaps would have provoked opposition—but, softened and sweetened by a little present to assist the reform recommended, it sunk into the hearts of the hearers, and in general overcame their objections. Besides, an opinion of the Nabob's wealth was high among the villagers; and an idea prevailed amongst them, that, notwithstanding his keeping no servants or equipage, he was able to purchase, if he pleased, half the land in the country. It was not grand carriages and fine liveries that made heavy purses, they rather helped to lighten them; and they said, who pretended to know what they were talking about, that old Turnpenny, and Mr. Bindloose to boot, would tell down more money on Mr. Touchwood's mere word, than upon the joint bond of half the fine folks at the Well. Such an opinion smoothed everything before the path of one, who

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showed himself neither averse to give nor to lend; and it by no means diminished the reputation of his wealth, that in transactions of business he was not carelessly negligent of his interest, but plainly showed he understood the value of what he was parting with. Few, therefore, cared to withstand the humours of a whimsical old gentleman, who had both the will and the means of obliging those disposed to comply with his fancies; and thus the singular stranger contrived, in the course of a brief space of days or weeks, to place the villagers more absolutely at his devotion, than they had been to the pleasure of any individual since their ancient lords had left the Aultoun. The power of the baron-bailie himself, though the office was vested in the person of old Meiklewham, was a subordinate jurisdiction, compared to the voluntary allegiance which the inhabitants paid to Mr. Touchwood.

There were, however, recusants, who declined the authority thus set up amongst them, and, with the characteristic obstinacy of their countrymen, refused to hearken to the words of the stranger, whether they were for good or for evil. These men's dunghills were not removed, nor the stumbling-blocks taken from the footpath, where it passed the front of their houses. And it befell, that while Mr. Touchwood was most eager in abating the nuisances of the village, he had very nearly experienced a frequent fate of great reformers—that of losing his life by means of one of those enormities which as yet had subsisted in spite of all his efforts.

The Nabob, finding his time after dinner hang somewhat heavy on his hand, and the moon being tolerably bright, had, one harvest evening, sought his usual remedy for dispelling ennui by a walk to the Manse, where he was sure, that, if he could not succeed in engaging the minister himself in some disputation, he would at least find something in the establishment to animadvert upon and to restore to order.

Accordingly, he had taken the opportunity to lecture the younger of the minister's lasses upon the duty of wearing shoes and stockings; and, as his advice came fortified by a present of six pair of white cotton hose, and two pair of stout leathern shoes, it was received, not with respect only, but with gratitude, and the chuck under the chin that rounded up the oration, while she opened the outer door for his honour, was acknowledged with a blush and a giggle. Nay, so far did Grizzy

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carry her sense of Mr. Touchwood's kindness, that, observing the moon was behind a cloud, she very carefully offered to escort him to the Cleikum Inn with a lantern, in case he should come to some harm by the gate. This the traveller's independent spirit scorned to listen to; and, having assured her that he had walked the streets of Paris and of Madrid whole nights without such an accommodation, he stoutly strode off on his return to his lodgings.

An accident, however, befell him, which, unless the police of Madrid and Paris be belied, might have happened in either of those two splendid capitals, as well as in the miserable Aultoun of St. Ronan's. Before the door of Saunders Jaup, a feuar of some importance, "who held his land free, and caredna a bodle for ony ane," yawned that odoriferous gulf, ycleped, in Scottish phrase, the jaw-hole, in other words, an uncovered common sewer. The local situation of this receptacle of filth was well known to Mr. Touchwood; for Saunders Jaup was at the very head of those who held out for the practices of their fathers, and still maintained those ancient and unsavoury customs which our traveller had in so many instances succeeded in abating. Guided, therefore, by his nose, the Nabob made a considerable circuit to avoid the displeasure and danger of passing this filthy puddle at the nearest, and by that means fell upon Scylla as he sought to avoid Charybdis. In plain language, he approached so near the bank of a little rivulet, which in that place passed betwixt the footpath and the horse-road, that he lost his footing, and fell into the channel of the streamlet from a height of three or four feet. It was thought that the noise of his fall, or at least his call for assistance, must have been heard in the house of Saunders Jaup; but that honest person was, according to his own account, at that time engaged in the exercise of the evening —an excuse which passed current, although Saunders was privately heard to allege, that the town would have been the quieter, "if the auld meddling busy-body had bidden still in the burn for gude and a'."

But fortune had provided better for poor Touchwood, whose foibles, as they arose out of the most excellent motives, would have ill deserved so severe a fate. A passenger who heard him shout for help, ventured cautiously to the side of the bank, down which he had fallen; and, after ascertaining the nature of the ground as carefully as the darkness permitted, was at

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length, and not without some effort, enabled to assist him out of the channel of the rivulet.

"Are you hurt materially?" said this good Samaritan to the object of his care.

"No—no—d—n it—no," said Touchwood, extremely angry at his disaster, and the cause of it. "Do you think I, who have been at the summit of Mount Athos, where the precipice sinks a thousand feet on the sea, care a farthing about such a fall as this is?"

But, as he spoke, he reeled, and his kind assistant caught him by the arm to prevent his falling.

"I fear you are more hurt than you suppose, sir," said the stranger; "permit me to go home along with you."

"With all my heart," said Touchwood; "for, though it is impossible I can need help in such a foolish matter, yet I am equally obliged to you, friend; and if the Cleikum Inn be not out of your road, I will take your arm so far, and thank you to the boot."

"It is much at your service, sir," said the stranger; "indeed, I was thinking to lodge there for the night."

"I am glad to hear it," resumed Touchwood; "you shall be my guest, and I will make them look after you in proper fashion—You seem to be a very civil sort of fellow, and I do not find your arm inconvenient—it is the rheumatism makes me walk so ill—the pest of all that have been in hot climates when they settle among these d—d fogs."

"Lean as hard and walk as slow as you will, sir," said the benevolent assistant—"this is a rough street."

"Yes, sir—and why is it rough?" answered Touchwood. "Why, because the old pig-headed fool, Saunders Jaup, will not allow it to be made smooth. There he sits, sir, and obstructs all rational improvement; and, if a man would not fall into his infernal putrid gutter, and so become an abomination unto himself and odious to others, for his whole life to come, he runs the risk of breaking his neck, as I have done to-night."

"I am afraid, sir," said his companion, "you have fallen on the most dangerous side.—You remember Swift's proverb, 'The more dirt the less hurt.'"

"But why should there be either dirt or hurt in a well-regulated place?" answered Touchwood—"Why should not men be able to go about their affairs at night, in such a hamlet as

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this, without either endangering necks or noses?—Our Scottish magistrates are worth nothing, sir—nothing at all. Oh for a Turkish cadi, now, to trounce the scoundrel—or the Mayor of Calcutta, to bring him into his court—or were it but an English Justice of the Peace that is newly included in the commission—they would abate the villain's nuisance with a vengeance on him—But here we are—this is the Cleikum Inn.—Hallo—hilloa—house!—Eppie Anderson!—Beenie Chambermaid!—boy Boots!—Mrs. Dods!—are you all of you asleep and dead?—Here have I been half murdered, and you let me stand bawling at the door!"

Eppie Anderson came with a light, and so did Beenie Chambermaid with another; but no sooner did they look upon the pair who stood in the porch under the huge sign that swung to and fro with heavy creaking, than Beenie screamed, flung away her candle, though a four in the pound, and in a newly-japanned candlestick, and fled one way, while Eppie Anderson, echoing the yell, brandished her light round her head like a Bacchante flourishing her torch, and ran off in another direction.

"Ay—I must be a bloody spectacle," said Mr. Touchwood, letting himself fall heavily upon his assistant's shoulder, and wiping his face, which trickled with wet—"I did not think I had been so seriously hurt; but I find my weakness now—I must have lost much blood."

"I hope you are still mistaken," said the stranger; "but here lies the way to the kitchen—we shall find light there, since no one chooses to bring it to us."

He assisted the old gentleman into the kitchen, where a lamp, as well as a bright fire, was burning, by the light of which he could easily discern that the supposed blood was only water of the rivulet, and, indeed, none of the cleanest, although much more so than the sufferer would have found it a little lower, where the stream is joined by the superfluities of Saunders Jaup's palladium. Relieved by his new friend's repeated assurances that such was the case, the senior began to bustle up a little, and his companion, desirous to render him every assistance, went to the door of the kitchen to call for a basin and water. Just as he was about to open the door, the voice of Mrs. Dods was heard as she descended the stairs, in a tone of indignation by no means unusual to her, yet mingled at the same time with a few notes that sounded like unto the quaverings of consternation."

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"Idle limmers—silly sluts—I'll warrant nane o' ye will ever see onything waur than yoursell, ye silly taupies—Ghaist, indeed! —I'll warrant it's some idle dub-skelper frae the Waal, coming after some o' yoursells on nae honest errand—Ghaist, indeed! —Haud up the candle, John Ostler—I'se warrant it a twa-handed ghaist, and the door left on the sneck—There's somebody in the kitchen—gang forward wi' the lantern, John Ostler."

At this critical moment the stranger opened the door of the kitchen, and beheld the dame advancing at the head of her household troops. The ostler and humpbacked postilion, one bearing a stable-lantern and a hay-fork, the other a rushlight and a broom, constituted the advanced guard; Mrs. Dods herself formed the centre, talking loud and brandishing a pair of tongs; while the two maids, like troops not much to be trusted after their recent defeat, followed, cowering, in the rear. But notwithstanding this admirable disposition, no sooner had the stranger shown his face, and pronounced the words "Mrs. Dods," than a panic seized the whole array. The advanced guard recoiled in consternation, the ostler upsetting Mrs. Dods in the confusion of his retreat; while she, grappling with him in her terror, secured him by the ears and hair, and they joined their cries together in hideous chorus. The two maidens resumed their former flight, and took refuge in the darksome den, entitled their bedroom, while the humpbacked postilion fled like the wind into the stable, and, with professional instinct, began in the extremity of his terror to saddle a horse.

Meanwhile, the guest whose appearance had caused this combustion, plucked the roaring ostler from above Mrs. Dods, and pushing him away with a hearty slap on the shoulder, proceeded to raise and encourage the fallen landlady, inquiring, at the same time, "What, in the devil's name, was the cause of all this senseless confusion?"

"And what is the reason, in Heaven's name," answered the matron, keeping her eyes firmly shut, and still shrewish in her expostulation, though in the very extremity of terror, "what is the reason that you should come and frighten a decent house, where you met naething but the height of civility?"

"And why should I frighten you, Mrs. Dods, or, in one word, what is the meaning of all this nonsensical terror?"

"Are not you," said Mrs. Dods, opening her eyes a little as she spoke, "the ghaist of Francis Tirl?"

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"I am Francis Tyrrel, unquestionably, my old friend."

"I kend it! I kend it!" answered the honest woman, relapsing into her agony; "and I think ye might be ashamed of yoursell, that are a ghaist, and have nae better to do than to frighten a puir auld alewife."

"On my word, I am no ghost, but a living man," answered Tyrrel.

"Were you no murdered than?" said Mrs. Dods, still in an uncertain voice, and only partially opening her eyes—"Are ye very sure ye werena murdered?"

"Why, not that ever I heard of, certainly, dame," replied Tyrrel.

"But *I* shall be murdered presently," said old Touchwood from the kitchen, where he had hitherto remained a mute auditor of this extraordinary scene—"*I* shall be murdered, unless you fetch me some water without delay."

"Coming, sir, coming," answered Dame Dods, her professional reply being as familiar to her as that of poor Francis's "Anon, anon, sir." "As I live by honest reckonings," said she, fully collecting herself, and giving a glance of more composed temper at Tyrrel, "I believe it *is* yoursell, Maister Frank, in blood and body after a'—and see if I dinna gie a proper sorting to yon twa silly jauds that gard me mak a bogle of you, and a fule of mysell—Ghaist! my certie, I sall ghaist them—if they had their heads as muckle on their wark as on their daffing, they wad play nae sic pliskies—it's the wanton steed that scaurs at the windlestrae—Ghaist! wha e'er heard of ghaists in an honest house? Naebody need fear bogles that has a conscience void of offence.—But I am blithe that MacTurk hasna murdered ye when a' is dune, Maister Frankie."

"Come this way, Mother Dods, if you would not have me do a mischief!" exclaimed Touchwood, grasping a plate which stood on the dresser, as if he were about to heave it at the landlady, by way of recalling her attention.

"For the love of Heaven, dinna break it!" exclaimed the alarmed landlady, knowing that Touchwood's effervescence of impatience sometimes expended itself at the expense of her crockery, though it was afterwards liberally atoned for. "Lord, sir, are ye out of your wits?—it breaks a set, ye ken—Godsake, put doun the cheeny plate, and try your hand on the delf-ware!

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—it will just make as good a jingle—But, Lord haud a grip o' us! now I look at ye, what can hae come ower ye, and what sort of a plight are ye in?—Wait till I fetch water and a towel."

In fact, the miserable guise of her new lodger now overcame the dame's curiosity to inquire after the fate of her earlier acquaintance, and she gave her instant and exclusive attention to Mr. Touchwood, with many exclamations, while aiding him to perform the task of ablution and abstersion. Her two fugitive handmaidens had by this time returned to the kitchen, and endeavoured to suppress a smuggled laugh at the recollection of their mistress's panic, by acting very officiously in Mr. Touchwood's service. By dint of washing and drying, the token of the sable stains was at length removed, and the veteran became, with some difficulty, satisfied that he had been more dirtied and frightened than hurt.

Tyrrel, in the meantime, stood looking on with wonder, imagining that he beheld in the features which emerged from a mask of mud the countenance of an old friend. After the operation was ended, he could not help addressing himself to Mr. Touchwood, to demand whether he had not the pleasure to see a friend to whom he had been obliged when at Smyrna, for some kindness respecting his money matters?

"Not worth speaking of—not worth speaking of," said Touchwood hastily. "Glad to see you, though—glad to see you. Yes, here I am; you will find me the same good-natured old fool that I was at Smyrna—never look how I am to get in money again—always laying it out. Never mind—it was written in my forehead, as the Turk says. I will go up now and change my dress—you will sup with me when I come back—Mrs. Dods will toss us up something—a brandered fowl will be best, Mrs. Dods, with some mushrooms, and get us a jug of mulled wine—plottie, as you call it—to put the recollection of the old Presbyterian's common sewer out of my head."

So saying, up stairs marched the traveller to his own apartment, while Tyrrel, seizing upon a candle, was about to do the same.

"Mr. Touchwood is in the blue room, Mrs. Dods; I suppose I may take possession of the yellow one?"

"Suppose naething about the matter, Maister Frankie Tirl, till ye tell me downright where ye hae been a' this time, and whether ye hae been murdered or no."

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"I think you may be pretty well satisfied of that, Mrs. Dods?"

"Troth! and so I am in a sense; and yet it gars me grue to look upon ye, sae mony days and weeks it has been since I thought ye were rotten in the moulds. And now to see ye standing before me hale and feir, and crying for a bedroom like ither folk!"

"One would almost suppose, my good friend," said Tyrrel, "that you were sorry at my having come alive again."

"It's no for that," replied Mrs. Dods, who was peculiarly ingenious in the mode of framing and stating what she conceived to be her grievances; "but is it not a queer thing for a decent man like yoursell, Maister Tirl, to be leaving your lodgings without a word spoken, and me put to a' these charges in seeking for your dead body, and very near taking my business out of honest Maister Bindloose's hands, because he kend the cantrips of the like of you better than I did?—and than they hae putten up an advertisement down at the Waal yonder, wi' a' their names at it, setting ye forth, Maister Frankie, as ane of the greatest blackguards unhanged; and wha, div ye think, is to keep ye in a creditable house, if that's the character ye get?"

"You may leave that to me, Mrs. Dods—I assure you that matter shall be put to rights to your satisfaction; and I think, so long as we have known each other, you may take my word that I am not undeserving the shelter of your roof for a single night (I shall ask it no longer), until my character is sufficiently cleared. It was for that purpose I chiefly came back again."

"Came back again!" said Mrs. Dods. "I profess ye made me start, Maister Tirl, and you looking sae pale, too. But I think," she added, straining after a joke, "if ye were a ghaist, seeing we are such auld acquaintance, ye wadna wish to spoil my custom, but would just walk decently up and down the auld castle wa's, or maybe down at the kirk yonder—there have been awfu' things dune in that kirk and kirkyard—I whiles dinna like to look that way, Maister Frankie."

"I am much of your mind, mistress," said Tyrrel, with a sigh; "and, indeed, I do in one sense resemble the apparitions you talk of; for, like them, and to as little purpose, I stalk about scenes where my happiness departed. But I speak

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riddles to you, Mrs. Dods—the plain truth is, that I met with an accident on the day I last left your house, the effects of which detained me at some distance from St. Ronan's till this very day."

"Hegh, sirs, and ye were sparing of your trouble, that wadna write a bit line, or send a bit message!—Ye might hae thought folk wad hae been vexed eneugh about ye, forby undertaking journeys, and hiring folk to seek for your dead body."

"I shall willingly pay all reasonable charges which my disappearance may have occasioned," answered her guest; "and I assure you, once for all, that my remaining for some time quiet at Marchthorn, arose partly from illness, and partly from business of a very pressing and particular nature."

"At Marchthorn!" exclaimed Dame Dods, "heard ever man the like o' that!—And where did ye put up in Marchthorn, an ane may mak bauld to speer?"

"At the Black Bull," replied Tyrrel.

"Ay, that's auld Tam Lowrie's—a very decent man, Thamas—and a douce creditable house—nane of your flisk-ma-hoys—I am glad ye made choice of sic gude quarters, neighbour; for I am beginning to think ye are but a queer ane—ye look as if butter wadna melt in your mouth, but I sall warrant cheese no choke ye.—But I'll thank ye to gang your ways into the parlour, for I am no like to get muckle mair out o' ye, it's like; and ye are standing here just in the gate, when we hae the supper to dish."

Tyrrel, glad to be released from the examination to which his landlady's curiosity had without ceremony subjected him, walked into the parlour, where he was presently joined by Mr. Touchwood, newly attired, and high in spirits.

"Here comes our supper!" he exclaimed.—"Sit ye down, and let us see what Mrs. Dods has done for us.—I profess, mistress, your plottie is excellent, ever since I taught you to mix the spices in the right proportion."

"I am glad the plottie pleases ye, sir—but I think I kend gay weel how to make it before I saw your honour—Maister Tirl can tell that, for mony a browst of it I hae brewed lang syne for him and the callant Valentine Bulmer."

This ill-timed observation extorted a groan from Tyrrel; but the traveller, running on with his own recollections, did not appear to notice his emotion.

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"You are a conceited old woman," said Mr. Touchwood; "how the devil should any one know how to mix spices so well as he who has been where they grow?—I have seen the sun ripening nutmegs and cloves, and here it can hardly fill a peascod, by Jupiter! Ah, Tyrrel, the merry nights we have had at Smyrna!—Gad, I think the gammon and the good wine taste all the better in a land where folks hold them to be sinful indulgence—Gad, I believe many a good Moslem is of the same opinion—that same prohibition of their prophet's gives a flavour to the ham, and a relish to the Cyprus.—Do you remember old Cogia Hassein, with his green turban?—I once played him a trick, and put a pint of brandy into his sherbet. Egad, the old fellow took care never to discover the cheat until he had got to the bottom of the flagon, and then he strokes his long white beard, and says, 'Ullah Kerim'—that is, 'Heaven is merciful,' Mrs. Dods, Mr. Tyrrel knows the meaning of it.—Ullah Kerim, says he, after he had drunk about a gallon of brandy-punch!—Ullah Kerim, says the hypocritical old rogue, as if he had done the finest thing in the world!"

"And what for no? What for shouldna the honest man say a blessing after his drap punch?" demanded Mrs. Dods; "it was better, I ween, than blasting, and blawing, and swearing, as if folks shouldna be thankful for the creature-comforts."

"Well said, old Dame Dods," replied the traveller; "that is a right hostess's maxim, and worthy of Mrs. Quickly herself. Here is to thee, and I pray ye to pledge me before ye leave the room."

"Troth, I'll pledge naebody the night, Maister Touchwood; for, what wi' the upcast and terror that I got a wee while syne, and what wi' the bit taste that I behoved to take of the plottie while I was making it, my head is sair eneugh distressed the night already.—Maister Tirl, the yellow room is ready for ye when you like; and, gentlemen, as the morn is the Sabbath, I canna be keeping the servant queans out of their beds to wait on ye ony langer, for they will make it an excuse for lying till aught o'clock on the Lord's day. So, when your plottie is done, I'll be muckle obliged to ye to light the bedroom candles, and put out the double moulds, and e'en show yoursells to your beds: for douce folks, sic as the like of you, should set an example by ordinary.—And so, gude-night to ye baith."

"By my faith," said Touchwood, as she withdrew, "our dame

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turns as obstinate as a Pacha with three tails!—We have her gracious permission to finish our mug, however; so here is to your health once more, Mr. Tyrrel, wishing you a hearty welcome to your own country."

"I thank you, Mr. Touchwood," answered Tyrrel; "and I return you the same good wishes, with, as I sincerely hope, a much greater chance of their being realised—You relieved me, sir, at a time when the villany of an agent, prompted, as I have reason to think, by an active and powerful enemy, occasioned my being, for a time, pressed for funds.—I made remittances to the *Ragion* you dealt with, to acquit myself at least of the pecuniary part of my obligation; but the bills were returned, because, it was stated, you had left Smyrna."

"Very true—very true—left Smyrna, and here I am in Scotland—as for the bills, we will speak of them another time—something due for picking me out of the gutter."

"I shall make no deduction on that account," said Tyrrel, smiling, though in no jocose mood; "and I beg you not to mistake me. The circumstances of embarrassment under which you found me at Smyrna were merely temporary—I am most able and willing to pay my debt; and, let me add, I am most desirous to do so."

"Another time—another time," said Mr. Touchwood—"time enough before us, Mr. Tyrrel—besides, at Smyrna, you talked of a lawsuit—law is a lick-penny, Mr. Tyrrel—no counsellor like the pound in purse."

"For my lawsuit," said Tyrrel, "I am fully provided."

"But have you good advice?—Have you good advice?" said Touchwood; "answer me that."

"I have advised with my lawyers," answered Tyrrel, internally vexed to find that his friend was much disposed to make his generosity upon the former occasion a pretext for prying farther into his affairs now than he thought polite or convenient.

"With your counsel learned in the law—eh, my dear boy? But the advice you should take is of some travelled friend, well acquainted with mankind and the world—some one that has lived double your years, and is maybe looking out for some bare young fellow that he may do a little good to—one that might be willing to help you farther than I can pretend to guess—for, as to your lawyer, you get just your guinea's worth from him—not even so much as the baker's bargain, thirteen to the dozen."

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"I think I should not trouble myself to go far in search of a friend such as you describe," said Tyrrel, who could not affect to misunderstand the senior's drift, "when I was near Mr. Peregrine Touchwood; but the truth is, my affairs are at present so much complicated with those of others, whose secrets I have no right to communicate, that I cannot have the advantage of consulting you, or any other friend. It is possible I may be soon obliged to lay aside this reserve, and vindicate myself before the whole public. I will not fail, when that time shall arrive, to take an early opportunity of confidential communication with you."

"That is right—confidential is the word—No person ever made a confidant of me who repented it—Think what the Pacha might have made of it, had he taken my advice, and cut through the Isthmus of Suez.—Turk and Christian, men of all tongues and countries, used to consult old Touchwood, from the building of a mosque down to the settling of an *agio*.—But come—Good-night—good-night."

So saying, he took up his bedroom light, and extinguished one of those which stood on the table, nodded to Tyrrel to discharge his share of the duty imposed by Mrs. Dods with the same punctuality, and they withdrew to their several apartments, entertaining very different sentiments of each other.

"A troublesome, inquisitive old gentleman," said Tyrrel to himself; "I remember him narrowly escaping the bastinado at Smyrna, for thrusting his advice on the Turkish cadi—and then I lie under a considerable obligation to him, giving him a sort of right to annoy me—Well, I must parry his impertinence as I can."

"A shy cock this Frank Tyrrel," thought the traveller; "a very complete dodger!—But no matter—I shall wind him were he to double like a fox—I am resolved to make his matters my own, and if *I* cannot carry him through, I know not who can."

Having formed this philanthropic resolution, Mr. Touchwood threw himself into bed, which luckily declined exactly at the right angle, and, full of self-complacency, consigned himself to slumber.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-NINTH.

MEDIATION.

———So, begone!
We will not now be troubled with reply;
We offer fair, take it advisedly.
KING HENRY IV. *Part I.*

IT had been the purpose of Tyrrel, by rising and breakfasting early, to avoid again meeting Mr. Touchwood, having upon his hands a matter in which that officious gentleman's interference was likely to prove troublesome. His character, he was aware, had been assailed at the Spa in the most public manner, and in the most public manner he was resolved to demand redress, conscious that whatever other important concerns had brought him to Scotland, must necessarily be postponed to the vindication of his honour. He was determined, for this purpose, to go down to the rooms when the company was assembled at the breakfast hour, and had just taken his hat to set out, when he was interrupted by Mrs. Dods, who, announcing "a gentleman that was speering for him," ushered into the chamber a very fashionable young man in a military surtout, covered with silk lace and fur, and wearing a foraging-cap; a dress now too familiar to be distinguished, but which at that time was used only by geniuses of a superior order. The stranger was neither handsome nor plain, but had in his appearance a good deal of pretension, and the cool easy superiority which belongs to high breeding. On his part, he surveyed Tyrrel; and, as his appearance differed, perhaps, from that for which the exterior of the Cleikum Inn had prepared him, he abated something of the air with which he had entered the room, and politely announced himself as Captain Jekyl, of the —— Guards (presenting, at the same time, his ticket).

"He presumed he spoke to Mr. Martigny?"

"To Mr. Francis Tyrrel, sir," replied Tyrrel, drawing himself up—"Martigny was my mother's name—I have never borne it."

"I am not here for the purpose of disputing that point, Mr. Tyrrel, though I am not entitled to admit what my principal's information leads him to doubt."

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"Your principal, I presume, is Sir Bingo Binks," said Tyrrel. "I have not forgotten that there is an unfortunate affair between us."

"I have not the honour to know Sir Bingo Binks," said Captain Jekyl. "I come on the part of the Earl of Etherington."

Tyrrel stood silent for a moment, and then said, "I am at a loss to know what the gentleman who calls himself Earl of Etherington can have to say to me, through the medium of such a messenger as yourself, Captain Jekyl. I should have supposed that, considering our unhappy relationship, and the terms on which we stand towards each other, the lawyers were the fitter negotiators between us."

"Sir," said Captain Jekyl, "you are misunderstanding my errand. I am come on no message of hostile import from Lord Etherington—I am aware of the connection betwixt you, which would render such an office altogether contradictory to common sense and the laws of nature; and I assure you, I would lay down my life rather than be concerned in an affair so unnatural. I would act, if possible, as a mediator betwixt you."

They had hitherto remained standing. Mr. Tyrrel now offered his guest a seat; and, having assumed one himself, he broke the awkward pause which ensued by observing, "I should be happy, after experiencing such a long course of injustice and persecution from your friend, to learn, even at this late period, Captain Jekyl, anything which can make me think better, either of him, or of his purpose towards me and towards others."

"Mr. Tyrrel," said Captain Jekyl, "you must allow me to speak with candour. There is too great a stake betwixt your brother and you to permit you to be friends; but I do not see it is necessary that you should therefore be mortal enemies."

"I am not my brother's enemy, Captain Jekyl," said Tyrrel —"I have never been so—His friend I cannot be, and he knows but too well the insurmountable barrier which his own conduct has placed between us."

"I am aware," said Captain Jekyl, slowly and expressively, "generally, at least, of the particulars of your unfortunate disagreement."

"If so," said Tyrrel, colouring, "you must be also aware with what extreme pain I feel myself compelled to enter on such a subject with a total stranger—a stranger, too, the friend

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and confidant of one who——But I will not hurt your feelings, Captain Jekyl, but rather endeavour to suppress my own. In one word, I beg to be favoured with the import of your communication, as I am obliged to go down to the Spa this morning, in order to put to rights some matters there which concern me nearly."

"If you mean the cause of your absence from an appointment with Sir Bingo Binks," said Captain Jekyl, "the matter has been already completely explained. I pulled down the offensive placard with my own hand, and rendered myself responsible for your honour to any one who should presume to hold it in future doubt."

"Sir," said Tyrrel, very much surprised, "I am obliged to you for your intention, the more so as I am ignorant how I have merited such interference. It is not, however, quite satisfactory to me, because I am accustomed to be the guardian of my own honour."

"An easy task, I presume, in all cases, Mr. Tyrrel," answered Jekyl, "but peculiarly so in the present, when you will find no one so hardy as to assail it.—My interference, indeed, would have been unjustifiably officious, had I not been at the moment undertaking a commission implying confidential intercourse with you. For the sake of my own character, it became necessary to establish yours. I know the truth of the whole affair from my friend, the Earl of Etherington, who ought to thank Heaven so long as he lives, that saved him on that occasion from the commission of a very great crime."

"Your friend, sir, has had, in the course of his life, much to thank Heaven for, but more for which to ask God's forgiveness."

"I am no divine, sir," replied Captain Jekyl, with spirit; "but I have been told that the same may be said of most men alive."

"I, at least, cannot dispute it," said Tyrrel; "but, to proceed. —Have you found yourself at liberty, Captain Jekyl, to deliver to the public the whole particulars of a rencontre so singular as that which took place between your friend and me?"

"I have not, sir," said Jekyl—"I judged it a matter of great delicacy, and which each of you had the like interest to preserve secret."

"May I beg to know, then," said Tyrrel, "how it was possible

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for you to vindicate my absence from Sir Bingo's rendezvous otherwise?"

"It was only necessary, sir, to pledge my word as a gentleman and a man of honour, characters in which I am pretty well known to the world, that, to my certain personal knowledge, you were hurt in an affair with a friend of mine, the farther particulars of which prudence required should be sunk into oblivion. I think no one will venture to dispute my word, or to require more than my assurance.—If there should be any one very hard of faith on the occasion, I shall find a way to satisfy him. In the meanwhile, your outlawry has been rescinded in the most honourable manner; and Sir Bingo, in consideration of his share in giving rise to reports so injurious to you, is desirous to drop all farther proceedings in his original quarrel, and hopes the whole matter will be forgot and forgiven on all sides."

"Upon my word, Captain Jekyl," answered Tyrrel, "you lay me under the necessity of acknowledging obligation to you. You have cut a knot which I should have found it very difficult to unloose; for I frankly confess, that, while I was determined not to remain under the stigma put upon me, I should have had great difficulty in clearing myself without mentioning circumstances, which, were it only for the sake of my father's memory, should be buried in eternal oblivion. I hope your friend feels no continued inconvenience from his hurt?"

"His lordship is nearly quite recovered," said Jekyl.

"And I trust he did me the justice to own, that, so far as my will was concerned, I am totally guiltless of the purpose of hurting him?"

"He does you full justice in that and everything else," replied Jekyl; "regrets the impetuosity of his own temper, and is determined to be on his guard against it in future."

"That," said Tyrrel, "is so far well; and now, may I ask once more, what communication you have to make to me on the part of your friend?—Were it from any one but him, whom I have found so uniformly false and treacherous, your own fairness and candour would induce me to hope that this unnatural quarrel might be in some sort ended by your mediation."

"I then proceed, sir, under more favourable auspices than I expected," said Captain Jekyl, "to enter on my commission.—You are about to commence a lawsuit, Mr. Tyrrel, if Fame does

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not wrong you, for the purpose of depriving your brother of his estate and title."

"The case is not fairly stated, Captain Jekyl," replied Tyrrel; "I commence a lawsuit, when I do commence it, for the sake of ascertaining my own just rights."

"It comes to the same thing eventually," said the mediator; "I am not called upon to decide upon the justice of your claims, but they are, you will allow, newly started. The late Countess of Etherington died in possession—open and undoubted possession—of her rank in society."

"If she had no real claim to it, sir," replied Tyrrel, "she had more than justice who enjoyed it so long; and the injured lady whose claims were postponed, had just so much less.—But this is no point for you and me to discuss between us—it must be tried elsewhere."

"Proofs, sir, of the strongest kind, will be necessary to overthrow a right so well established in public opinion as that of the present possessor of the title of Etherington."

Tyrrel took a paper from his pocket-book, and, handing it to Captain Jekyl, only answered, "I have no thoughts of asking you to give up the cause of your friend; but methinks the documents of which I give you a list, may shake your opinion of it."

Captain Jekyl read, muttering to himself, "'*Certificate of marriage, by the Rev. Zadock Kemp, chaplain to the British Embassy at Paris, between Marie de Bellroche, Comtesse de Martigny, and the Right Honourable John Lord Oakendale—Letters between John Earl of Etherington and his lady, under the title of Madame de Martigny—Certificate of baptism—Declaration of the Earl of Etherington on his deathbed.*'—All this is very well—but may I ask you, Mr. Tyrrel, if it is really your purpose to go to extremity with your brother?"

"He has forgot that he is one—he has lifted his hand against my life."

"You have shed his blood—twice shed it," said Jekyl; "the world will not ask which brother gave the offence, but which received, which inflicted, the severest wound."

"Your friend has inflicted one on me, sir," said Tyrrel, "that will bleed while I have the power of memory."

"I understand you, sir," said Captain Jekyl; "you mean the affair of Miss Mowbray?"

"Spare me on that subject, sir!" said Tyrrel. "Hitherto I

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have disputed my most important rights—rights which involved my rank in society, my fortune, the honour of my mother, with something like composure; but do not say more on the topic you have touched upon, unless you would have before you a madman!—Is it possible for you, sir, to have heard even the outline of this story, and to imagine that I can ever reflect on the cold-blooded and most inhuman stratagem, which this friend of yours prepared for two unfortunates, without"—— He started up, and walked impetuously to and fro. "Since the Fiend himself interrupted the happiness of perfect innocence, there was never such an act of treachery—never such schemes of happiness destroyed—never such inevitable misery prepared for two wretches who had the idiocy to repose perfect confidence in him!—Had there been passion in his conduct, it had been the act of a man—a wicked man, indeed, but still a human creature, acting under the influence of human feelings—but his was the deed of a calm, cold, calculating demon, actuated by the basest and most sordid motives of self-interest, joined, as I firmly believe, to an early and inveterate hatred of one whose claims he considered at variance with his own."

"I am sorry to see you in such a temper," said Captain Jekyl, calmly; "Lord Etherington, I trust, acted on very different motives than those you impute to him; and if you will but listen to me, perhaps something may be struck out which may accommodate these unhappy disputes."

"Sir," said Tyrrel, sitting down again, "I will listen to you with calmness, as I would remain calm under the probe of a surgeon tenting a festered wound. But when you touch me to the quick, when you prick the very nerve, you cannot expect me to endure without wincing."

"I will endeavour, then, to be as brief in the operation as I can," replied Captain Jekyl, who possessed the advantage of the most admirable composure during the whole conference. "I conclude, Mr. Tyrrel, that the peace, happiness, and honour of Miss Mowbray, are dear to you?"

"Who dare impeach her honour?" said Tyrrel, fiercely; then checking himself, added in a more moderate tone, but one of deep feeling, "They are dear to me, sir, as my eyesight."

"My friend holds them in equal regard," said the Captain; "and has come to the resolution of doing her the most ample justice."

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"He can do her justice no otherwise, than by ceasing to haunt this neighbourhood, to think, to speak, even to dream of her."

"Lord Etherington thinks otherwise," said Captain Jekyl; "he believes that if Miss Mowbray has sustained any wrong at his hands, which, of course, I am not called upon to admit, it will be best repaired by the offer to share with her his title, his rank, and his fortune."

"His title, rank, and fortune, sir, are as much a falsehood as he is himself," said Tyrrel, with violence—"Marry Clara Mowbray? never!"

"My friend's fortune, you will observe," replied Jekyl, "does not rest entirely upon the event of the lawsuit with which you, Mr. Tyrrel, now threaten him.—Deprive him, if you can, of the Oakendale estate, he has still a large patrimony by his mother; and besides, as to his marriage with Clara Mowbray, he conceives, that unless it should be the lady's wish to have the ceremony repeated, to which he is most desirous to defer his own opinion, they have only to declare that it has already passed between them."

"A trick, sir!" said Tyrrel, "a vile infamous trick! of which the lowest wretch in Newgate would be ashamed—the imposition of one person for another."

"Of that, Mr. Tyrrel, I have seen no evidence whatever. The clergyman's certificate is clear—Francis Tyrrel is united to Clara Mowbray in the holy bands of wedlock—such is the tenor—there is a copy—nay, stop one instant, if you please, sir. You say there was an imposition in the case—I have no doubt but you speak what you believe, and what Miss Mowbray told you. She was surprised—forced in some measure from the husband she had just married—ashamed to meet her former lover, to whom, doubtless, she had made many a vow of love, and ne'er a true one—what wonder that, unsupported by her bridegroom, she should have changed her tone, and thrown all the blame of her own inconstancy on the absent swain?—A woman, at a pinch so critical, will make the most improbable excuse, rather than be found guilty on her own confession."

"There must be no jesting in this case," said Tyrrel, his cheek becoming pale, and his voice altered with passion.

"I am quite serious, sir," replied Jekyl; "and there is no law court in Britain that would take the lady's word—all she has to offer, and that in her own cause—against a whole body

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of evidence, direct and circumstantial, showing that she was by her own free consent married to the gentleman who now claims her hand.—Forgive me, sir—I see you are much agitated—I do not mean to dispute your right of believing what you think is most credible—I only use the freedom of pointing out to you the impression which the evidence is likely to make on the minds of indifferent persons."

"Your friend," answered Tyrrel, affecting a composure which, however, he was far from possessing, "may think by such arguments to screen his villany; but it cannot avail him—the truth is known to Heaven—it is known to me—and there is, besides, one indifferent witness upon earth, who can testify that the most abominable imposition was practised on Miss Mowbray."

"You mean her cousin—Hannah Irwin, I think, is her name," answered Jekyl; "you see I am fully acquainted with all the circumstances of the case. But where is Hannah Irwin to be found?"

"She will appear, doubtless, in Heaven's good time, and to the confusion of him who now imagines the only witness of his treachery—the only one who could tell the truth of this complicated mystery—either no longer lives, or, at least, cannot be brought forward against him, to the ruin of his schemes. Yes, sir, that slight observation of yours has more than explained to me why your friend, or to call him by his true name, Mr. Valentine Bulmer, has not commenced his machinations sooner, and also why he has commenced them now. He thinks himself certain that Hannah Irwin is not now in Britain, or to be produced in a court of justice—he may find himself mistaken."

"My friend seems perfectly confident of the issue of his cause," answered Jekyl; "but, for the lady's sake, he is most unwilling to prosecute a suit which must be attended with so many circumstances of painful exposure."

"Exposure, indeed!" answered Tyrrel; "thanks to the traitor who laid a mine so fearful, and who now affects to be reluctant to fire it.—Oh! how I am bound to curse that affinity that restrains my hands! I would be content to be the meanest and vilest of society, for one hour of vengeance on this unexampled hypocrite!—One thing is certain, sir—your friend will have no living victim. His persecution will kill Clara Mowbray, and fill up the cup of his crimes with the murder of one of the sweetest——I shall grow a woman if I say more on the subject!"

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"My friend," said Jekyl, "since you like best to have him so defined, is as desirous as you can be to spare the lady's feelings; and with that view, not reverting to former passages, he has laid before her brother a proposal of alliance, with which Mr. Mowbray is highly pleased."

"Ha!" said Tyrrel, starting—"And the lady?"—

"And the lady so far proved favourable, as to consent that Lord Etherington shall visit Shaws Castle."

"Her consent must have been extorted!" exclaimed Tyrrel.

"It was given voluntarily," said Jekyl, "as I am led to understand; unless, perhaps, in so far as the desire to veil these very unpleasing transactions may have operated, I think naturally enough, to induce her to sink them in eternal secrecy, by accepting Lord Etherington's hand.—I see, sir, I give you pain, and am sorry for it.—I have no title to call upon you for any exertion of generosity; but should such be Miss Mowbray's sentiments, is it too much to expect of you, that you will not compromise the lady's honour by insisting upon former claims, and opening up disreputable transactions so long past?"

"Captain Jekyl," said Tyrrel solemnly, "I have no claims. Whatever I might have had were cancelled by the act of treachery through which your friend endeavoured too successfully to supplant me. Were Clara Mowbray as free from her pretended marriage as law could pronounce her, still with me —*me*, at least, of all men in the world—the obstacle must ever remain, that the nuptial benediction has been pronounced over her and the man whom I must for once call *brother*."—He stopped at that word, as if it had cost him agony to pronounce it, and then resumed:—"No, sir, I have no views of personal advantage in this matter—they have been long annihilated—But I will not permit Clara Mowbray to become the wife of a villain—I will watch over her with thoughts as spotless as those of her guardian angel. I have been the cause of all the evil she has sustained—I first persuaded her to quit the path of duty—I, of all men who live, am bound to protect her from the misery —from the guilt which must attach to her as this man's wife. I will never believe that she wishes it—I will never believe that, in calm mind and sober reason, she can be brought to listen to such a guilty proposal.—But her mind—alas!—is not of the firm texture it once could boast; and your friend knows well how to press on the spring of every passion that can agitate and

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alarm her. Threats of exposure may extort her consent to this most unfitting match, if they do not indeed drive her to suicide, which I think the most likely termination. I will, therefore, be strong where she is weak.—Your friend, sir, must at least strip his proposals of their fine gilding. I will satisfy Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's of his false pretences, both to rank and fortune; and I rather think he will protect his sister against the claim of a needy profligate, though he might be dazzled with the alliance of a wealthy peer."

"Your cause, sir, is not yet won," answered Jekyl; "and when it is, your brother will retain property enough to entitle him to marry a greater match than Miss Mowbray, besides the large estate of Nettlewood, to which that alliance must give him right. But I would wish to make some accommodation between you, if it were possible. You profess, Mr. Tyrrel, to lay aside all selfish wishes and views in this matter, and to look entirely to Miss Mowbray's safety and happiness?"

"Such, upon my honour, is the exclusive purpose of my interference—I would give all I am worth to procure her an hour of quiet—for happiness she will never know again."

"Your anticipations of Miss Mowbray's distress," answered Jekyl, "are, I understand, founded upon the character of my friend. You think him a man of light principle, and because he overreached you in a juvenile intrigue, you conclude that now, in his more steady and advanced years, the happiness of the lady in whom you are so much interested ought not to be trusted to him?"

"There may be other grounds," said Tyrrel hastily; "but you may argue upon those you have named, as sufficient to warrant my interference."

"How, then, if I should propose some accommodation of this nature? Lord Etherington does not pretend to the ardour of a passionate lover. He lives much in the world, and has no desire to quit it. Miss Mowbray's health is delicate—her spirits variable—and retirement would most probably be her choice—Suppose—I am barely putting a supposition—suppose that a marriage between two persons so circumstanced were rendered necessary or advantageous to both—suppose that such a marriage were to secure to one party a large estate—were to insure the other against all the consequences of an unpleasant exposure—still, both ends might be obtained by the mere ceremony of

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marriage passing between them. There might be a previous contract of separation, with suitable provisions for the lady, and stipulations, by which the husband should renounce all claim to her society. Such things happen every season, if not on the very marriage-day, yet before the honeymoon is over.—Wealth and freedom would be the lady's, and as much rank as you, sir, supposing your claims just, may think proper to leave them."

There was a long pause, during which Tyrrel underwent many changes of countenance, which Jekyl watched carefully, without pressing him for an answer. At length he replied, "There is much in your proposal, Captain Jekyl, which I might be tempted to accede to, as one manner of unloosing this Gordian knot, and a compromise by which Miss Mowbray's future tranquillity would be in some degree provided for. But I would rather trust a fanged adder than your friend, unless I saw him fettered by the strongest ties of interest. Besides, I am certain the unhappy lady could never survive the being connected with him in this manner, though but for the single moment when they should appear together at the altar. There are other objections"——

He checked himself, paused, and then proceeded in a calm and self-possessed tone. "You think, perhaps, even yet, that I have some selfish and interested views in this business; and probably you may feel yourself entitled to entertain the same suspicion towards me which I avowedly harbour respecting every proposition which originates with your friend.—I cannot help it —I can but meet these disadvantageous impressions with plain dealing and honesty; and it is in the spirit of both that *I* make a proposition to *you*.—Your friend is attached to rank, fortune, and worldly advantages, in the usual proportion, at least, in which they are pursued by men of the world—this you must admit, and I will not offend you by supposing more."

"I know few people who do not desire such advantages," answered Captain Jekyl; "and I frankly own, that he affects no particular degree of philosophic indifference respecting them."

"Be it so," answered Tyrrel. "Indeed, the proposal you have just made indicates that his pretended claim on this young lady's hand is entirely, or almost entirely, dictated by motives of interest, since you are of opinion that he would be contented to separate from her society on the very marriage-day, provided that, in doing so, he was assured of the Nettlewood property."

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"My proposition was unauthorised by my principal," answered Jekyl; "but it is needless to deny, that its very tenor implies an idea, on my part, that Lord Etherington is no passionate lover."

"Well then," answered Tyrrel. "Consider, sir, and let him consider well, that the estate and rank he now assumes depend upon my will and pleasure—that, if I prosecute the claims of which that scroll makes you aware, he must descend from the rank of an earl into that of a commoner, stripped of by much the better half of his fortune—a diminution which would be far from being compensated by the estate of Nettlewood, even if he could obtain it, which could only be by means of a lawsuit, precarious in the issue, and most dishonourable in its very essence."

"Well, sir," replied Jekyl, "I perceive your argument—What is your proposal?"

"That I will abstain from prosecuting my claim on those honours and that property—that I will leave Valentine Bulmer in possession of his usurped title and ill-deserved wealth—that I will bind myself under the strongest penalties never to disturb his possession of the Earldom of Etherington, and estates belonging to it—on condition that he allows the woman, whose peace of mind he has ruined for ever, to walk through the world in her wretchedness, undisturbed either by his marriage-suit, or by any claim founded upon his own most treacherous conduct—in short, that he forbear to molest Clara Mowbray, either by his presence, word, letter, or through the intervention of a third party, and be to her in future as if he did not exist."

"This is a singular offer," said the Captain; "may I ask if you are serious in making it?"

"I am neither surprised nor offended at the question," said Tyrrel. "I am a man, sir, like others, and affect no superiority to that which all men desire the possession of—a certain consideration and station in society. I am no romantic fool, to undervalue the sacrifice I am about to make. I renounce a rank, which is and ought to be the more valuable to me, because it involves (he blushed as he spoke) the fame of an honoured mother—because, in failing to claim it, I disobey the commands of a dying father, who wished that by doing so I should declare to the world the penitence which hurried him perhaps to the grave, and the making which public he con-

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sidered might be some atonement for his errors. From an honoured place in the land, I descend voluntarily to become a nameless exile; for, once certain that Clara Mowbray's peace is assured, Britain no longer holds me. All this I do, sir, not in any idle strain of overheated feeling, but seeing, and knowing, and dearly valuing, every advantage which I renounce—yet I do it, and do it willingly, rather than be the cause of farther evil to one, on whom I have already brought too—too much."

His voice, in spite of his exertions, faltered as he concluded the sentence, and a big drop, which rose in his eye, required him for the moment to turn towards the window.

"I am ashamed of this childishness," he said, turning again to Captain Jekyl; "if it excites your ridicule, sir, let it be at least a proof of my sincerity."

"I am far from entertaining such sentiments," said Jekyl, respectfully—for, in a long train of fashionable follies, his heart had not been utterly hardened—"very far indeed. To a proposal so singular as yours, I cannot be expected to answer—except thus far—the character of the peerage is, I believe, indelible, and cannot be resigned or assumed at pleasure. If you are really Earl of Etherington, I cannot see how your resigning the right may avail my friend."

"You, sir, it might not avail," said Tyrrel, gravely, "because you, perhaps, might scorn to exercise a right, or hold a title, that was not legally yours. But your friend will have no such compunctious visitings. If he can act the Earl to the eye of the world, he has already shown that his honour and conscience will be easily satisfied."

"May I take a copy of the memorandum containing this list of documents," said Captain Jekyl, "for the information of my constituent?"

"The paper is at your pleasure, sir," replied Tyrrel; "it is itself but a copy. But, Captain Jekyl," he added, with a sarcastic expression, "is, it would seem, but imperfectly let into his friend's confidence—he may be assured his principal is completely acquainted with the contents of this paper, and has accurate copies of the deeds to which it refers."

"I think it scarce possible," said Jekyl, angrily.

"Possible and certain!" answered Tyrrel. "My father, shortly preceding his death, sent me—with a most affecting con-

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fession of his errors—this list of papers, and acquainted me that he had made a similar communication to your friend. That he did so I have no doubt, however Mr. Bulmer may have thought proper to disguise the circumstance in communication with you. One circumstance, among others, stamps at once his character, and confirms me of the danger he apprehended by my return to Britain. He found means, through a scoundrelly agent, who had made me the usual remittances from my father while alive, to withhold those which were necessary for my return from the Levant, and I was obliged to borrow from a friend."

"Indeed?" replied Jekyl. "It is the first time I have heard of these papers—May I inquire where the originals are, and in whose custody?"

"I was in the East," answered Tyrrel, "during my father's last illness, and these papers were by him deposited with a respectable commercial house, with which he was connected. They were enclosed in a cover directed to me, and that again in an envelope, addressed to the principal person in their firm."

"You must be sensible," said Captain Jekyl, "that I can scarcely decide on the extraordinary offer which you have been pleased to make, of resigning the claim founded on these documents, unless I had a previous opportunity of examining them."

"You shall have that opportunity—I will write to have them sent down by the post—they lie but in small compass."

"This, then," said the Captain, "sums up all that can be said at present. Supposing these proofs to be of unexceptionable authenticity, I certainly would advise my friend Etherington to put to sleep a claim so important as yours, even at the expense of resigning his matrimonial speculation—I presume you design to abide by your offer?"

"I am not in the habit of altering my mind—still less of retracting my word," said Tyrrel, somewhat haughtily.

"We part friends, I hope?" said Jekyl, rising, and taking his leave.

"Not enemies, certainly, Captain Jekyl. I will own to you I owe you my thanks, for extricating me from that foolish affair at the Well—nothing could have put me to more inconvenience than the necessity of following to extremity a frivolous quarrel at the present moment."

"You will come down among us, then?" said Jekyl.

"I certainly shall not wish to appear to hide myself,"

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answered Tyrrel; "it is a circumstance might be turned against me—there is a party who will avail himself of every advantage. I have but one path, Captain Jekyl—that of truth and honour."

Captain Jekyl bowed, and took his leave. So soon as he was gone, Tyrrel locked the door of the apartment, and drawing from his bosom a portrait, gazed on it with a mixture of sorrow and tenderness, until the tears dropped from his eyes.

It was the picture of Clara Mowbray, such as he had known her in the days of their youthful love, and taken by himself, whose early turn for painting had already developed itself. The features of the blooming girl might be yet traced in the fine countenance of the more matured original. But what was now become of the glow which had shaded her cheek?—what of the arch, yet subdued pleasantry, which lurked in the eye?—what of the joyous content, which composed every feature to the expression of an Euphrosyne?—Alas! these were long fled!—Sorrow had laid his hand upon her—the purple light of youth was quenched—the glance of innocent gaiety was exchanged for looks now moody with ill-concealed care, now animated by a spirit of reckless and satirical observation.

"What a wreck! what a wreck!" exclaimed Tyrrel; "and all of one wretch's making.—Can I put the last hand to the work, and be her murderer outright? I cannot—I cannot! I will be strong in the resolve I have formed—I will sacrifice all—rank—station—fortune—and fame. Revenge!—Revenge itself, the last good left me—revenge itself I will sacrifice to obtain her such tranquillity as she may be yet capable to enjoy."

In this resolution he sat down, and wrote a letter to the commercial house with whom the document of his birth, and other relative papers, were deposited, requesting that the packet containing them should be forwarded to him through the post-office.

Tyrrel was neither unambitious, nor without those sentiments respecting personal consideration, which are usually united with deep feeling and an ardent mind. It was with a trembling hand and a watery eye, but with a heart firmly resolved, that he sealed and despatched the letter; a step towards the resignation, in favour of his mortal enemy, of that rank and condition in life, which was his own by right of inheritance, but had so long hung in doubt betwixt them.

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CHAPTER THIRTIETH.

INTRUSION.

By my troth, I will go with thee to the lane's-end !—I am a kind of burr—I shall stick.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

IT was now far advanced in autumn. The dew lay thick on the long grass, where it was touched by the sun; but where the sward lay in shadow, it was covered with hoar frost, and crisped under Jekyl's foot, as he returned through the woods of St. Ronan's. The leaves of the ash-tree detached themselves from the branches, and, without an air of wind, fell spontaneously on the path. The mists still lay lazily upon the heights, and the huge old tower of St. Ronan's was entirely shrouded with vapour, except where a sunbeam, struggling with the mist, penetrated into its wreath so far as to show a projecting turret upon one of the angles of the old fortress, which, long a favourite haunt of the raven, was popularly called the Corbie's Tower. Beneath, the scene was open and lightsome, and the robin redbreast was chirping his best, to atone for the absence of all other choristers. The fine foliage of autumn was seen in many a glade, running up the sides of each little ravine, russet-hued and golden-specked, and tinged frequently with the red hues of the mountain-ash; while here and there a huge old fir, the native growth of the soil, flung his broad shadow over the rest of the trees, and seemed to exult in the permanence of his dusky livery over the more showy but transitory brilliance by which he was surrounded.

Such is the scene, which, so often described in prose and in poetry, yet seldom loses its effect upon the ear or upon the eye, and through which we wander with a strain of mind congenial to the decline of the year. There are few who do not feel the impression; and even Jekyl, though bred to far different pursuits than those most favourable to such contemplation, relaxed his pace to admire the uncommon beauty of the landscape.

Perhaps, also, he was in no hurry to rejoin the Earl of Etherington, towards whose service he felt himself more disinclined since his interview with Tyrrel. It was clear that that noble-

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man had not fully reposed in his friend the confidence promised; he had not made him aware of the existence of those important documents of proof, on which the whole fate of his negotiation appeared now to hinge, and in so far had deceived him. Yet, when he pulled from his pocket and re-read Lord Etherington's explanatory letter, Jekyl could not help being more sensible than he had been on the first perusal, how much the present possessor of that title felt alarmed at his brother's claims; and he had some compassion for the natural feeling that must have rendered him shy of communicating at once the very worst view of his case, even to his most confidential friend. Upon the whole, he remembered that Lord Etherington had been his benefactor to an unusual extent; that, in return, he had promised the young nobleman his active and devoted assistance, in extricating him from the difficulties with which he seemed at present surrounded; that, in quality of his confidant, he had become acquainted with the most secret transactions of his life; and that it could only be some very strong cause indeed, which could justify breaking off from him at this moment. Yet he could not help wishing either that his own obligations had been less, his friend's cause better, or, at least, the friend himself more worthy of assistance.

"A beautiful morning, sir, for such a foggy, d—d climate as this," said a voice close by Jekyl's ear, which made him at once start out of his contemplation. He turned half round, and beside him stood our honest friend Touchwood, his throat muffled in his large Indian handkerchief, huge gouty shoes thrust upon his feet, his bob-wig well powdered, and the gold-headed cane in his hand, carried upright as a serjeant's halberd. One glance of contemptuous survey entitled Jekyl, according to his modish ideas, to rank the old gentleman as a regular-built quiz, and to treat him as the young gentlemen of his Majesty's Guards think themselves entitled to use every unfashionable variety of the human species. A slight inclination of a bow, and a very cold "You have the advantage of me, sir," dropped as it were unconsciously from his tongue, were meant to repress the old gentleman's advances, and moderate his ambition to be hail fellow well met with his betters. But Mr. Touchwood was callous to the intended rebuke; he had lived too much at large upon the world, and was far too confident of his own merits, to take a repulse easily, or to permit his modesty to interfere with any purpose which he had formed.

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"Advantage of you, sir?" he replied; "I have lived too long in the world not to keep all the advantages I have, and get all I can—and I reckon it one that I have overtaken you, and shall have the pleasure of your company to the Well."

"I should but interrupt your worthier meditations, sir," said the other; "besides, I am a modest young man, and think myself fit for no better company than my own—moreover, I walk slow—very slow.—Good morning to you, Mr. A—A—I believe my treacherous memory has let slip your name, sir."

"My name!—Why, your memory must have been like Pat Murtough's greyhound, that let the hare go before he caught it. You never heard my name in your life. Touchwood is my name. What d'ye think of it, now you know it?"

"I am really no connoisseur in surnames," answered Jekyl; "and it is quite the same to me whether you call yourself Touchwood or Touchstone. Don't let me keep you from walking on, sir. You will find breakfast far advanced at the Well, sir, and your walk has probably given you an appetite."

"Which will serve me to luncheon-time, I promise you," said Touchwood; "I always drink my coffee as soon as my feet are in my pabouches—it's the way all over the East. Never trust my breakfast to their scalding milk-and-water at the Well, I assure you; and for walking slow, I have had a touch of the gout."

"Have you?" said Jekyl; "I am sorry for that; because, if you have no mind to breakfast, I have—and so, Mr. Touchstone, good-morrow to you."

"But, although the young soldier went off at double quick time, his pertinacious attendant kept close by his side, displaying an activity which seemed inconsistent with his make and his years, and talking away the whole time, so as to show that his lungs were not in the least degree incommoded by the unusual rapidity of motion.

"Nay, young gentleman, if you are for a good smart walk, I am for you, and the gout may be d—d. You are a lucky fellow to have youth on your side; but yet, so far as between the Aultoun and the Well, I think I could walk you for your sum, barring running—all heel and toe—equal weight, and I would match Barclay himself for a mile."

"Upon my word, you are a gay old gentleman!" said Jekyl, relaxing his pace; "and if we must be fellow travellers, though

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I can see no great occasion for it, I must even shorten sail for you."

So saying, and as if another means of deliverance had occurred to him, he slackened his pace, took out a morocco case of cigars, and, lighting one with his *briquet*, said, while he walked on, and bestowed as much of its fragrance as he could upon the face of his intrusive companion, "Vergeben sie, mein Herr—ich bin erzogen in kaiserlicher Dienst—muss rauchen ein klein wenig." *

"Rauchen sie immer fort," said Touchwood, producing a huge meerschaum, which, suspended by a chain from his neck, lurked in the bosom of his coat, "habe auch mein Pfeifchen—Sehen sie den lieben Topf!" † and he began to return the smoke, if not the fire, of his companion, in full volumes, and with interest.

"The devil take the twaddle," said Jekyl to himself; "he is too old and too fat to be treated after the manner of Professor Jackson; and, on my life, I cannot tell what to make of him. He is a residenter too—I must tip him the cold shoulder, or he will be pestering me eternally."

Accordingly, he walked on, sucking his cigar, and apparently in as abstracted a mood as Mr. Cargill himself, without paying the least attention to Touchwood, who, nevertheless, continued talking, as if he had been addressing the most attentive listener in Scotland, whether it were the favourite nephew of a cross, old, rich bachelor, or the aid-de-camp of some old rusty firelock of a general, who tells stories of the American war.

"And so, sir, I can put up with any companion at a pinch, for I have travelled in all sort of ways, from a caravan down to a carrier's cart; but the best society is the best everywhere; and I am happy I have fallen in with a gentleman who suits me so well as you.—That grave, steady attention of yours reminds me of Elfi Bey—you might talk to him in English, or anything he understood least of—you might have read Aristotle to Elfi, and not a muscle would he stir—give him his pipe, and he would sit on his cushion with a listening air, as if he took in every word of what you said."

* Forgive me, sir, I was bred in the Imperial service, and must smoke a little.

† Smoke as much as you please; I have got my pipe too.—See what a beautiful head!

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Captain Jekyl threw away the remnant of his cigar, with a little movement of pettishness, and began to whistle an opera air

"There again, now!—That is just so like the Marquis of Roccombole, another dear friend of mine, that whistles all the time you talk to him—He says he learnt it in the Reign of Terror, when a man was glad to whistle, to show his throat was whole. And, talking of great folk, what do you think of this affair between Lord Etherington and his brother, or cousin, as some folk call him?"

Jekyl absolutely started at the question; a degree of emotion, which, had it been witnessed by any of his fashionable friends, would for ever have ruined his pretensions to rank in their first order.

"What affair?" he asked, so soon as he could command a certain degree of composure.

"Why, you know the news surely? Francis Tyrrel, whom all the company voted a coward the other day, turns out as brave a fellow as any of us; for, instead of having run away to avoid having his own throat cut by Sir Bingo Binks, he was at the very moment engaged in a gallant attempt to murder his elder brother, or his more lawful brother, or his cousin, or some such near relation."

"I believe you are misinformed, sir," said Jekyl, dryly, and then resumed, as deftly as he could, his proper character of a pococurante.

"I am told," continued Touchwood, "one Jekyl acted as a second to them both on the occasion—a proper fellow, sir—one of those fine gentlemen whom we pay for polishing the pavement in Bond Street, and looking at a thick shoe and a pair of worsted stockings, as if the wearer were none of their paymasters. However, I believe the Commander-in-chief is like to discard him when he hears what has happened."

"Sir!" said Jekyl, fiercely—then, recollecting the folly of being angry with an original of his companion's description, he proceeded more coolly, "You are misinformed—Captain Jekyl knew nothing of any such matter as you refer to—you talk of a person you know nothing of—Captain Jekyl is"——(Here he stopped a little, scandalised, perhaps, at the very idea of vindicating himself to such a personage from such a charge.)

"Ay, ay," said the traveller, filling up the chasm in his own

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way, "he is not worth our talking of, certainly—but I believe he knew as much of the matter as either you or I do, for all that."

"Sir, this is either a very great mistake, or wilful impertinence," answered the officer. "However absurd or intrusive you may be, I cannot allow you, either in ignorance or incivility, to use the name of Captain Jekyl with disrespect.—I am Captain Jekyl, sir."

"Very like, very like," said Touchwood, with the most provoking indifference; "I guessed as much before."

"Then, sir, you may guess what is likely to follow, when a gentleman hears himself unwarrantably and unjustly slandered," replied Captain Jekyl, surprised and provoked that his annunciation of name and rank seemed to be treated so lightly. "I advise you, sir, not to proceed too far upon the immunities of your age and insignificance."

"I never presume farther than I have good reason to think necessary, Captain Jekyl," answered Touchwood, with great composure. "I am too old, as you say, for any such idiotical business as a duel, which no nation I know of practises but our silly fools of Europe—and then, as for your switch, which you are grasping with so much dignity, that is totally out of the question. Look you, young gentleman; four-fifths of my life have been spent among men who do not set a man's life at the value of a button on his collar—every person learns, in such cases, to protect himself as he can; and whoever strikes me must stand to the consequences. I have always a brace of bull-dogs about me, which put age and youth on a level. So suppose me horse-whipped, and pray, at the same time, suppose yourself shot through the body. The same exertion of imagination will serve for both purposes."

So saying, he exhibited a very handsome, highly-finished, and richly-mounted pair of pistols.

"Catch me without my tools," said he, significantly buttoning his coat over the arms, which were concealed in a side-pocket, ingeniously contrived for that purpose. "I see you do not know what to make of me," he continued, in a familiar and confidential tone; "but, to tell you the truth, everybody that has meddled in this St. Ronan's business is a little off the hooks—something of a *tête exaltée*, in plain words, a little crazy, or so; and I do not affect to be much wiser than other people."

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"Sir," said Jekyl, "your manners and discourse are so unprecedented that I must ask your meaning plainly and decidedly—Do you mean to insult me, or no?"

"No insult at all, young gentleman—all fair meaning, and above board—I only wished to let you know what the world may say, that is all."

"Sir," said Jekyl, hastily, "the world may tell what lies it pleases; but I was not present at the rencontre between Etherington and Mr. Tyrrel—I was some hundred miles off."

"There now," said Touchwood, "there *was* a rencontre between them—the very thing I wanted to know."

"Sir," said Jekyl, aware too late that, in his haste to vindicate himself, he had committed his friend, "I desire you will found nothing on an expression hastily used to vindicate myself from a false aspersion—I only meant to say, if there was an affair such as you talk of, I knew nothing of it."

"Never mind—never mind—I shall make no bad use of what I have learned," said Touchwood. "Were you to eat your words with the best fish sauce (and that is Burgess's), I have got all the information from them I wanted."

"You are strangely pertinacious, sir," replied Jekyl.

"Oh, a rock, a piece of flint for that—What I have learned I have learned, but I will make no bad use of it—Hark ye, Captain, I have no malice against your friend—perhaps the contrary—but he is in a bad course, sir—has kept a false reckoning, for as deep as he thinks himself; and I tell you so, because I hold you (your finery out of the question) to be, as Hamlet says, indifferent honest; but, if you were not, why necessity is necessity; and a man will take a Bedouin for his guide in the desert, whom he would not trust with an asper in the cultivated field; so I think of reposing some confidence in you—have not made up my mind yet, though."

"On my word, sir, I am greatly flattered both by your intentions and your hesitation," said Captain Jekyl. "You were pleased to say just now, that every one concerned with these matters was something particular."

"Ay, ay—something crazy—a little mad, or so. That was what I said, and I can prove it."

"I should be glad to hear the proof," said Jekyl—"I hope you do not except yourself."

"Oh! by no means," answered Touchwood; "I am one of

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the maddest old boys ever slept out of straw, or went loose. But you can put fishing questions in your turn, Captain, I see that—you would fain know how much, or how little, I am in all these secrets. Well, that is as hereafter may be. In the meantime, here are my proofs.—Old Scrogie Mowbray was mad, to like the sound of Mowbray better than that of Scrogie; young Scrogie was mad, not to like it as well. The old Earl of Etherington was not sane when he married a French wife in secret, and devilish mad indeed when he married an English one in public. Then, for the good folk here, Mowbray of St. Ronan's is cracked, when he wishes to give his sister to he knows not precisely whom; she is a fool not to take him, because she *does* know who he is, and what has been between them; and your friend is maddest of all, who seeks her under so heavy a penalty;—and you and I, Captain, go mad gratis, for company's sake, when we mix ourselves with such a mess of folly and frenzy."

"Really, sir, all that you have said is an absolute riddle to me," replied the embarrassed Jekyl.

"Riddles may be read," said Touchwood, nodding; "if you have any desire to read mine, pray take notice, that this being our first interview, I have exerted myself *faire les frais de la conversation*, as Jack Frenchman says; if you want another, you may come to Mrs. Dods's at the Cleikum Inn, any day before Saturday, at four precisely, when you will find none of your half-starved, long-limbed bundles of bones, which you call poultry at the table-d'hôte, but a right Chitty-gong fowl—I got Mrs. Dods the breed from old Ben Vandewash, the Dutch broker—stewed to a minute, with rice and mushrooms.—If you can eat without a silver fork, and your appetite serves you, you shall be welcome—that's all.—So, good morning to you, good master lieutenant, for a Captain of the Guards is but a lieutenant after all."

So saying, and ere Jekyl could make any answer, the old gentleman turned short off into a path which led to the healing fountain, branching away from that which conducted to the Hotel.

Uncertain with whom he had been holding a conversation so strange, Jekyl remained looking after him, until his attention was roused by a little boy, who crept out from an adjoining thicket, with a switch in his hand, which he had been

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just cutting,—probably against regulations to the contrary effect made and provided, for he held himself ready to take cover in the copse again, in case any one were in sight who might be interested in chastising his delinquency. Captain Jekyl easily recognised in him one of that hopeful class of imps who pick up a precarious livelihood about places of public resort, by going errands, brushing shoes, doing the groom's and coachman's work in the stables, driving donkeys, opening gates, and so forth, for but one-tenth part of their time, spending the rest in gambling, sleeping in the sun, and otherwise qualifying themselves to exercise the profession of thieves and pickpockets, either separately, or in conjunction with those of waiters, grooms, and postilions. The little outcast had an indifferent pair of pantaloons, and about half a jacket, for like Pentapolin with the naked arm, he went on action with his right shoulder bare; a third part of what had once been a hat covered his hair, bleached white with the sun, and his face, as brown as a berry, was illuminated by a pair of eyes, which, for spying out either peril or profit, might have rivalled those of the hawk.—In a word, it was the original Puck of the Shaws dramaticals.

"Come hither, ye unhanged whelp," said Jekyl, "and tell me if you know the old gentleman that passed down the walk just now—yonder he is, still in sight."

"It is the Naboab," said the boy; "I could swear to his back among all the backs at the Waal, your honour."

"What do you call a Nabob, you varlet?"

"A Naboab—a Naboab?" answered the scout; "odd, I believe it is ane comes frae foreign parts, with mair siller than his pouches can haud, and spills it a' through the country—they are as yellow as orangers, and maun hae a' thing their ain gate."

"And what is this Naboab's name, as you call him?" demanded Jekyl.

"His name is Touchwood," said his informer, "ye may see him at the Waal every morning."

"I have not seen him at the ordinary."

"Na, na," answered the boy; "he's a queer auld cull, he disna frequent wi' other folk, but lives upby at the Cleikum.—He gave me half-a-crown yince, and forbade me to play it awa' at pitch and toss."

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"And you disobeyed him, of course?"

"Na, I didna dis-obeyed him—I played it awa' at neevie-neevie-nick-nack."

"Well, there is sixpence for thee; lose it to the devil in any way thou think'st proper."

So saying, he gave the little galopin his donative, and a slight rap on the pate at the same time, which sent him scouring from his presence. He himself hastened to Lord Etherington's apartments, and, as luck would have it, found the Earl alone.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIRST.

DISCUSSION.

I will converse with iron-witted fools
And unrespective boys—none are for me
That look into me with suspicious eyes.

RICHARD III.

"How now, Jekyl!" said Lord Etherington eagerly; "what news from the enemy?—Have you seen him?"

"I have," replied Jekyl.

"And in what humour did you find him?—In none that was very favourable, I dare say, for you have a baffled and perplexed look, that confesses a losing game—I have often warned you how your hang-dog look betrays you at brag—And, then, when you would fain brush up your courage, and put a good face on a bad game, your bold looks always remind me of a standard hoisted only half-mast high, and betraying melancholy and dejection, instead of triumph and defiance."

"I am only holding the cards for your lordship at present," answered Jekyl; "and I wish to Heaven there may be no one looking over the hand."

"How do you mean by that?"

"Why, I was beset on returning through the wood by an old bore, a Nabob, as they call him, and Touchwood by name."

"I have seen such a quiz about," said Lord Etherington—"What of him?"

"Nothing," answered Jekyl; "except that he seemed to

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know much more of your affairs than you would wish or are aware of. He smoked the truth of the rencontre betwixt Tyrrel and you, and what is worse—I must needs confess the truth—he contrived to wring out of me a sort of confirmation of his suspicions."

"'Slife! wert thou mad?" said Lord Etherington, turning pale; "his is the very tongue to send the story through the whole country—Hal, you have undone me."

"I hope not," said Jekyl; "I trust in Heaven I have not! —His knowledge is quite general—only that there was some scuffle between you—Do not look so dismayed about it, or I will e'en go back and cut his throat to secure his secrecy."

"Cursed indiscretion!" answered the Earl—"how could you let him fix on you at all?"

"I cannot tell," said Jekyl—"he has powers of boring beyond ten of the dullest of all possible doctors—stuck like a limpet to a rock—a perfect double of the Old Man of the Sea, whom I take to have been the greatest bore on record."

"Could you not have turned him on his back like a turtle, and left him there?" said Lord Etherington.

"And had an ounce of lead in my body for my pains? No —no—we have already had footpad work enough—I promise you the old buck was armed, as if he meant to bing folks on the low toby."*

"Well—well—but Martigny, or Tyrrel, as you call him—what says he?"

"Why, Tyrrel, or Martigny, as your lordship calls him," answered Jekyl, "will by no means listen to your lordship's proposition. He will not consent that Miss Mowbray's happiness shall be placed in your lordship's keeping; nay, it did not meet his approbation a bit the more, when I hinted at the acknowledgment of the marriage, or the repetition of the ceremony, attended by an immediate separation, which I thought I might venture to propose."

"And on what grounds does he refuse so reasonable an accommodation?" said Lord Etherington—"Does he still seek to marry the girl himself?"

"I believe he thinks the circumstances of the case render that impossible," replied his confidant.

"What? then he would play the dog in the manger—neither

* "Rob as a footpad."

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eat nor let eat?—He shall find himself mistaken. She has used me like a dog, Jekyl, since I saw you; and, by Jove! I will have her, that I may break her pride, and cut him to the liver with the agony of seeing it."

"Nay, but hold—hold!" said Jekyl; "perhaps I have something to say on his part that may be a better compromise than all you could have by teasing him. He is willing to purchase what he calls Miss Mowbray's tranquillity at the expense of his resignation of his claims to your father's honours and estate; and he surprised me very much, my lord, by showing me this list of documents, which, I am afraid, makes his success more than probable, if there really are such proofs in existence." Lord Etherington took the paper, and seemed to read with much attention, while Jekyl proceeded—"He has written to procure these evidences from the person with whom they are deposited."

"We shall see what like they are when they arrive," said Lord Etherington.—"They come by post, I suppose?"

"Yes; and may be immediately expected," said Jekyl.

"Well—he is my brother on one side of the house, at least," said Lord Etherington; "and I should not much like to have him lagged for forgery, which, I suppose, will be the end of his bolstering up an unsubstantial plea by fabricated documents—I should like to see these papers he talks of."

"But, my lord," replied Jekyl, "Tyrrel's allegation is, that you *have* seen them; and that copies, at least, were made out for you, and are in your possession—such is his averment."

"He lies," answered Lord Etherington, "so far as he pretends I know of such papers. I consider the whole story as froth—foam—fudge, or whatever is most unsubstantial. It will prove such when the papers appear, if indeed they ever will appear. The whole is a bully from beginning to end; and I wonder at thee, Jekyl, for being so thirsty after syllabub, that you can swallow such whipt cream as that stuff amounts to. No, no—I know my advantage, and shall use it so as to make all their hearts bleed. As for these papers, I recollect now that my agent talked of copies of some manuscripts having been sent him, but the originals were not then forthcoming; and I'll bet the long odds that they never are—mere fabrications—if I thought otherwise, would I not tell you?"

"Certainly, I hope you would, my lord," said Jekyl; "for

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I see no chance of my being useful to you, unless I have the honour to enjoy your confidence."

"You do—you do, my friend," said Etherington, shaking him by the hand; "and since I must consider your present negotiation as failed, I must devise some other mode of settling with this mad and troublesome fellow."

"No violence, my lord," said Jekyl, once more, and with much emphasis.

"None—none—none, by Heaven!—Why, thou suspicious wretch, must I swear to quell your scruples?—On the contrary, it shall not be my fault if we are not on decent terms."

"It would be infinitely to the advantage of both your characters if you could bring that to pass," answered Jekyl; "and if you are serious in wishing it, I will endeavour to prepare Tyrrel. He comes to the Well or to the ordinary to-day, and it would be highly ridiculous to make a scene."

"True, true; find him out, my dear Jekyl, and persuade him how foolish it will be to bring our family quarrels out before strangers, and for their amusement. They shall see the two bears can meet without biting.—Go—go—I will follow you instantly—go, and remember you have my full and exclusive confidence.—Go, half-bred startling fool!" he continued, the instant Jekyl had left the room, "with just spirits enough to ensure your own ruin, by hurrying you into what you are not up to.—But he has character in the world—is brave—and one of those whose countenance gives a fair face to a doubtful business. He is my creature, too—I have bought and paid for him, and it would be idle extravagance not to make use of him—But as to confidence—no confidence, honest Hal, beyond that which cannot be avoided. If I wanted a confidant, here comes a better than thou by half—Solmes has no scruples—he will always give me money's worth of zeal and secrecy *for* money."

His lordship's valet at this moment entered the apartment, a grave, civil-looking man, past the middle age, with a sallow complexion, a dark thoughtful eye, slow, and sparing of speech, and sedulously attentive to all the duties of his situation.

"Solmes," said Lord Etherington, and then stopped short.

"My lord"—There was a pause; and when Lord Etherington had again said, "Solmes!" and his valet had answered, "Your lordship," there was a second pause; until the Earl, as if recollecting himself, "Oh! I remember what I wished to say

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—it was about the course of post here. It is not very regular, I believe?"

"Regular enough, my lord, so far as concerns this place—the people in the Aultoun do not get their letters in course."

"And why not, Solmes?" said his lordship.

"The old woman who keeps the little inn there, my lord, is on bad terms with the post-mistress—the one will not send for the letters, and the other will not despatch them to the village; so, betwixt them, they are sometimes lost, or mislaid, or returned to the General Post-office."

"I wish that may not be the case of a packet which I expect in a few days—it should have been here already, or, perhaps, it may arrive in the beginning of the week—it is from that formal ass, Trueman the Quaker, who addresses me by my Christian and family name, Francis Tyrrel. He is like enough to mistake the inn, too, and I should be sorry it fell into Monsieur Martigny's hands—I suppose you know he is in that neighbourhood?—Look after its safety, Solmes—quietly, you understand; because people might put odd constructions, as if I were wanting a letter which was not my own."

"I understand perfectly, my lord," said Solmes, without exhibiting the slightest change in his sallow countenance, though perfectly comprehending the nature of the service required.

"And here is a note will pay for postage," said the Earl, putting into his valet's hand a bank-bill of considerable value; "and you may keep the balance for occasional expenses."

This was also fully understood; and Solmes, too politic and cautious even to look intelligence, or acknowledge gratitude, made only a bow of acquiescence, put the note into his pocket-book, and assured his lordship that his commands should be punctually attended to.

"There goes the agent for my money, and for my purpose," said Lord Etherington, exultingly; "no extorting of confidence, no demanding of explanations, no tearing off the veil with which a delicate manœuvre is *gazé*—all excuses are received as *argent comptant*, provided only, that the best excuse of all, the *argent comptant* itself, come to recommend them.—Yet I will trust no one—I will out, like a skilful general, and reconnoitre in person."

With this resolution, Lord Etherington put on his surtout and cap, and sallying from his apartments, took the way to the

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bookseller's shop, which also served as post-office and circulating library; and being in the very centre of the parade (for so is termed the broad terrace-walk which leads from the inn to the Well), it formed a convenient lounging-place for newsmongers and idlers of every description.

The Earl's appearance created, as usual, a sensation upon the public promenade; but whether it was the suggestion of his own alarmed conscience, or that there was some real cause for the remark, he could not help thinking his reception was of a more doubtful character than usual. His fine figure and easy manners produced their usual effect, and all whom he spoke to received his attention as an honour; but none offered, as usual, to unite themselves to him, or to induce him to join their party. He seemed to be looked on rather as an object of observation and attention, than as making one of the company; and to escape from a distant gaze, which became rather embarrassing, he turned into the little emporium of news and literature.

He entered unobserved, just as Lady Penelope had finished reading some verses, and was commenting upon them with all the alacrity of a *femme savante*, in possession of something which no one is to hear repeated oftener than once.

"Copy—no indeed!" these were the snatches which reached Lord Etherington's ear, from the group of which her ladyship formed the centre—"honour bright—I must not betray poor Chatterly—besides, his lordship is my friend, and a person of rank, you know—so one would not—You have not got the book, Mr. Pott?—you have not got Statius?—you never have anything one longs to see."

"Very sorry, my lady—quite out of copies at present—I expect some in my next monthly parcel."

"Good lack, Mr. Pott, that is your never-failing answer," said Lady Penelope; "I believe if I were to ask you for the last new edition of the Alkoran, you would tell me it was coming down in your next monthly parcel."

"Can't say, my lady, really," answered Mr. Pott; "have not seen the work advertised yet; but I have no doubt, if it is likely to take, there will be copies in my next monthly parcel."

"Mr. Pott's supplies are always in the *paullo post futurum* tense," said Mr. Chatterly, who was just entering the shop.

"Ah! Mr. Chatterly, are you there?" said Lady Penelope;

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"I lay my death at your door—I cannot find this Thebaid, where Polynices and his brother"——

"Hush my lady!—hush, for Heaven's sake!" said the poetical divine, and looked towards Lord Etherington. Lady Penelope took the hint, and was silent; but she had said enough to call up the traveller Touchwood, who raised his head from the newspaper which he was studying, and without addressing his discourse to any one in particular, ejaculated, as if in scorn of Lady Penelope's geography—

"Polynices?—Polly Peachum.—There is no such place in the Thebais—the Thebais is in Egypt—the mummies come from the Thebais—I have been in the catacombs—caves very curious indeed—we were lapidated by the natives—pebbled to some purpose, I give you my word. My janizary thrashed a whole village by way of retaliation."

While he was thus proceeding, Lord Etherington, as if in a listless mood, was looking at the letters which stood ranged on the chimney-piece, and carrying on a languid dialogue with Mrs. Pott, whose person and manners were not ill adapted to her situation, for she was good-looking, and vastly fine and affected.

"Number of letters here which don't seem to find owners, Mrs. Pott?"

"Great number, indeed, my lord—it is a great vexation, for we are obliged to return them to the post-office, and the postage is charged against us if they are lost; and how can one keep sight of them all?"

"Any love-letters among them, Mrs. Pott?" said his lordship, lowering his tone.

"Oh, fie! my lord, how should I know?" answered Mrs. Pott, dropping her voice to the same cadence.

"Oh! every one can tell a love-letter—that has ever received one, that is—one knows them without opening—they are always folded hurriedly and sealed carefully—and the direction manifests a kind of tremulous agitation, that marks the state of the writer's nerves—that now,"—pointing with his switch to a letter upon the chimney-piece, that *must* be a love-letter."

"He, he, he!" giggled Mrs. Pott. "I beg pardon for laughing, my lord—but—he, he, he!—that is a letter from one Bindloose, the banker body, to the old woman Luckie Dods, as they call her, at the change-house in the Aultoun."

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"Depend upon it, then, Mrs. Pott, that your neighbour, Mrs. Dods, has got a lover in Mr. Bindloose—unless the banker has been shaking hands with the palsy. Why do you not forward her letter?—you are very cruel to keep it in durance here."

"Me forward!" answered Mrs. Pott; "the capernoity, old, girning alewife, may wait long enough or I forward it—She'll not loose the letters that come to her by the King's post, and she must go on troking wi' the old carrier, as if there was no post-house in the neighbourhood. But the solicitor will be about wi' her one of these days."

"Oh! you are too cruel—you really should send the love-letter; consider, the older she is, the poor soul has the less time to lose."

But this was a topic on which Mrs. Pott understood no jesting. She was well aware of our matron's inveteracy against her and her establishment, and she resented it as a placeman resents the efforts of a radical. She answered, something sulkily, "That they that loosed letters should have letters; and neither Luckie Dods, nor any of her lodgers, should ever see the scrape of a pen from the St. Ronan's office, that they did not call for and pay for."

It is probable that this declaration contained the essence of the information which Lord Etherington had designed to extract by his momentary flirtation with Mrs. Pott, for when, retreating as it were from this sore subject, she asked him, in a pretty mincing tone, to try his skill in pointing out another love-letter, he only answered, carelessly, "that in order to do that he must write her one;" and leaving his confidential station by her little throne, he lounged through the narrow shop, bowed slightly to Lady Penelope as he passed, and issued forth upon the parade, where he saw a spectacle which might have appalled a man of less self-possession than himself.

Just as he left the shop, little Miss Digges entered almost breathless, with the emotion of impatience and of curiosity. "Oh la! my lady, what do you stay here for?—Mr. Tyrrel has just entered the other end of the parade this moment, and Lord Etherington is walking that way—they must meet each other.—O Lord! come, come away, and see them meet!—I wonder if they'll speak—I hope they won't fight—Oh la! do come, my lady!"

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"I must go with you, I find," said Lady Penelope; "it is the strangest thing, my love, that curiosity of yours about other folk's matters—I wonder what your mamma will say to it."

"Oh! never mind mamma—nobody minds her—papa, nor nobody—Do come, dearest Lady Pen, or I will run away by myself.—Mr. Chatterly, do make her come!"

"I must come, it seems," said Lady Penelope, "or I shall have a pretty account of you."

But, notwithstanding this rebuke, and forgetting, at the same time, that people of quality ought never to seem in a hurry, Lady Penelope, with such of her satellites as she could hastily collect around her, tripped along the parade with unusual haste, in sympathy, doubtless, with Miss Digges's curiosity, as her ladyship declared she had none of her own.

Our friend, the traveller, had also caught up Miss Digges's information; and, breaking off abruptly an account of the Great Pyramid, which had been naturally introduced by the mention of the Thebais, and echoing the fair alarmist's words, "hope they won't fight," he rushed upon the parade, and bustled along as hard as his sturdy supporters could carry him. If the gravity of the traveller, and the delicacy of Lady Penelope, were surprised into unwonted haste from their eagerness to witness the meeting of Tyrrel and Lord Etherington, it may be well supposed that the decorum of the rest of the company was a slender restraint on their curiosity, and that they hurried to be present at the expected scene, with the alacrity of gentlemen of the fancy hastening to a set-to.

In truth, though the meeting afforded little sport to those who expected dire conclusions, it was, nevertheless, sufficiently interesting to those spectators who are accustomed to read the language of suppressed passion, betraying itself at the moment when the parties are most desirous to conceal it.

Tyrrel had been followed by several loiterers so soon as he entered the public walk; and their number was now so much reinforced that he saw himself with pain and displeasure the centre of a sort of crowd, who watched his motions. Sir Bingo and Captain MacTurk were the first to bustle through it, and to address him with as much politeness as they could command.

"Servant, sir," mumbled Sir Bingo, extending the right hand of fellowship and reconciliation, ungloved. "Servant—

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sorry that anything should have happened between us—very sorry, on my word."

"No more need be said, sir," replied Tyrrel; "the whole is forgotten."

"Very handsome, indeed—quite the civil thing—hope to meet you often, sir."—And here the knight was silent.

Meanwhile the more verbose Captain proceeded, "Och, py Cot, and it was an ahful mistake, and I could draw the penknife across my finger for having written the word.—By my sowl, and I scratched it till I scratched a hole in the paper.—Och! that I should live to do an uncivil thing by a gentleman that had got himself hit in an honourable affair! But you should have written, my dear; for how the devil could we guess that you were so well provided in quarrels, that you had to settle two in one day?"

"I was hurt in an unexpected—an accidental manner, Captain MacTurk. I did not write, because there was something in my circumstances at the moment which required secrecy; but I was resolved, the instant I recovered, to put myself to rights in your good opinion."

"Och! and you have done that," said the Captain, nodding sagaciously; "for Captain Jekyl, who is a fine child, has put us all up to your honourable conduct. They are pretty boys, these guardsmen, though they may play a little fine sometimes, and think more of themselves than peradventure they need for to do, in comparison with us of the line.—But he let us know all about it—and, though he said not a word of a certain fine lord, with his footpad and his hurt, and what not, yet we all knew how to lay that and that together.—And if the law would not right you, and there were bad words between you, why should not two gentlemen right themselves? And as to your being kinsmen, why should not kinsmen behave to each other like men of honour? Only, some say you are father's sons, and that *is* something too near.—I had once thoughts of calling out my uncle Dougal myself, for there is no saying where the line should be drawn; but I thought, on the whole, there should be no fighting, as there is no marriage, within the forbidden degrees. As for first cousins—Wheugh!—that's all fair—fire away, Flanigan!—But here is my lord, just upon us, like a stag of the first head, and the whole herd behind him."

Tyrrel stepped forward a little before his officious companions,

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his complexion rapidly changing into various shades, like that of one who forces himself to approach and touch some animal or reptile for which he entertains that deep disgust and abhorrence which was anciently ascribed to constitutional antipathy. This appearance of constraint put upon himself, with the changes which it produced on his face, was calculated to prejudice him somewhat in the opinion of the spectators, when compared with the steady, stately, yet, at the same time, easy demeanour of the Earl of Etherington, who was equal to any man in England in the difficult art of putting a good countenance on a bad cause. He met Tyrrel with an air as unembarrassed as it was cold; and, while he paid the courtesy of a formal and distant salutation, he said aloud, "I presume, Mr. Tyrrel de Martigny, that, since you have not thought fit to avoid this awkward meeting, you are disposed to remember our family connection so far as to avoid making sport for the good company?"

"You have nothing to apprehend from my passion, Mr. Bulmer," replied Tyrrel, "if you can assure yourself against the consequences of your own."

"I am glad of that," said the Earl, with the same composure, but sinking his voice so as only to be heard by Tyrrel; "and, as we may not again in a hurry hold any communication together, I take the freedom to remind you, that I sent you a proposal of accommodation by my friend, Mr. Jekyl."

"It was inadmissible," said Tyrrel—"altogether inadmissible—both from reasons which you may guess, and others which it is needless to detail.—I sent you a proposition, think of it well."

"I will," replied Lord Etherington, "when I shall see it supported by those alleged proofs, which I do not believe ever had existence."

"Your conscience holds another language from your tongue," said Tyrrel; "but I disclaim reproaches, and decline altercation. I will let Captain Jekyl know when I have received the papers, which, you say, are essential to your forming an opinion on my proposal. In the meanwhile, do not think to deceive me. I am here for the very purpose of watching and defeating your machinations; and, while I live, be assured they shall never succeed. And now, sir—or my lord—for the titles are in your choice—fare you well."

"Hold a little," said Lord Etherington. "Since we are condemned to shock each other's eyes, it is fit the good company

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should know what they are to think of us. You are a philosopher, and do not value the opinion of the public—a poor worldling like me is desirous to stand fair with it. Gentlemen," he continued, raising his voice, "Mr. Winterblossom, Captain MacTurk, Mr.—what is his name, Jekyl?—Ay, Micklehen—You have, I believe, all some notion, that this gentleman, my near relation, and I, have some undecided claims on each other, which prevent our living upon good terms. We do not mean, however, to disturb you with our family quarrels; and, for my own part, while this gentleman, Mr. Tyrrel, or whatever he may please to call himself, remains a member of this company, my behaviour to him will be the same as to any stranger who may have that advantage.—Good morrow to you, sir—Good morning, gentlemen—we all meet at dinner, as usual.—Come, Jekyl."

So saying, he took Jekyl by the arm, and, gently extricating himself from the sort of crowd, walked off, leaving most of the company prepossessed in his favour, by the ease and apparent reasonableness of his demeanour. Sounds of depreciation, forming themselves indistinctly into something like the words, "My eye, and Betty Martin," did issue from the neckcloth of Sir Bingo, but they were not much attended to; for it had not escaped the observation of the quicksighted gentry at the Well, that the Baronet's feelings towards the noble Earl were in the inverse ratio of those displayed by Lady Binks, and that, though ashamed to testify, or perhaps incapable of feeling, any anxious degree of jealousy, his temper had been for some time considerably upon the fret; a circumstance concerning which his fair moiety did not think it necessary to give herself any concern.

Meanwhile the Earl of Etherington walked onward with his confidant, in the full triumph of successful genius.

"You see," he said, "Jekyl, that I can turn a corner with any man in England. It was a proper blunder of yours, that you must extricate the fellow from the mist which accident had flung around him—you might as well have published the story of our rencontre at once, for every one can guess it, by laying time, place, and circumstance together; but never trouble your brains for a justification. You marked how I assumed my natural superiority over him—towered up in the full pride of legitimacy—silenced him, even where the good company most do congregate. This will go to Mowbray through his agent, and will put him still madder on my alliance. I know he looks

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jealously on my flirtation with a certain lady—the dasher yonder—nothing makes a man sensible of the value of an opportunity but the chance of losing it."

"I wish to Heaven you would give up thoughts of Miss Mowbray!" said Jekyl; "and take Tyrrel's offer, if he has the means of making it good."

"Ay, if—if. But I am quite sure he has no such rights as he pretends to, and that his papers are all a deception.—Why do you put your eye upon me as fixed as if you were searching out some wonderful secret?"

"I wish I knew what to think of your real *bona fide* belief respecting these documents," said Jekyl, not a little puzzled by the steady and unembarrassed air of his friend.

"Why, thou most suspicious of coxcombs," said Etherington, "what the devil would you have me to say to you?—Can I, as the lawyers say, prove a negative? or, is it not very possible, that such things may exist, though I have never seen or heard of them? All I can say is, that of all men I am the most interested to deny the existence of such documents; and, therefore, certainly will not admit of it, unless I am compelled to do so by their being produced; nor then either, unless I am at the same time well assured of their authenticity."

"I cannot blame you for your being hard of faith, my lord," said Jekyl; "but still I think if you can cut out with your earldom, and your noble hereditary estate, I would, in your case, pitch Nettlewood to the devil."

"Yes, as you pitched your own patrimony, Jekyl; but you took care to have the spending of it first. What would *you* give for such an opportunity of piecing your fortunes by marriage?—Confess the truth."

"I might be tempted, perhaps," said Jekyl, "in my present circumstances; but if they were what they have been, I should despise an estate that was to be held by petticoat tenure, especially when the lady of the manor was a sickly fantastic girl, that hated me, as this Miss Mowbray has the bad taste to hate you."

"Umph—sickly?—no, no, she is not sickly—she is as healthy as any one in constitution—and, on my word, I think her paleness only renders her more interesting. The last time I saw her, I thought she might have rivalled one of Canova's finest statues."

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"Yes; but she is indifferent to you—you do not love her," said Jekyl.

"She is anything but indifferent to me," said the Earl; "she becomes daily more interesting—for her dislike piques me; and besides, she has the insolence openly to defy and contemn me before her brother, and in the eyes of all the world. I have a kind of loving hatred—a sort of hating love for her; in short, thinking upon her is like trying to read a riddle, and makes one make quite as many blunders, and talk just as much nonsense. If ever I have the opportunity, I will make her pay for all her airs."

"What airs?" said Jekyl.

"Nay, the devil may describe them, for I cannot; but, for example—Since her brother has insisted on her receiving me, or I should rather say on her appearing when I visit Shaws Castle, one would think her invention has toiled in discovering different ways of showing want of respect to me, and dislike to my presence. Instead of dressing herself as a lady should, especially on such occasions, she chooses some fantastic, or old-fashioned, or negligent bedizening, which makes her at least look odd, if it cannot make her ridiculous—such triple tiaras of various coloured guaze on her head—such pieces of old tapestry, I think, instead of shawls and pelisses—such thick-soled shoes—such tan-leather gloves—mercy upon us, Hal, the very sight of her equipment would drive mad a whole conclave of milliners! Then her postures are so strange—she does so stoop and lollop, as the women call it, so cross her legs and square her arms—were the goddess of grace to look down on her, it would put her to flight for ever!"

"And you are willing to make this awkward, ill-dressed, unmannered dowdy, your Countess, Etherington; you, for whose critical eye half the town dress themselves?" said Jekyl.

"It is all a trick, Hal—all an assumed character to get rid of me, to disgust me, to baffle me; but I am not to be had so easily. The brother is driven to despair—he bites his nails, winks, coughs, makes signs, which she always takes up at cross-purpose. I hope he beats her after I go away; there would be a touch of consolation, were one but certain of that."

"A very charitable hope, truly, and your present feelings might lead the lady to judge what she may expect after wedlock. But," added Jekyl, "cannot you, so skilful in fathoming

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every mood of the female mind, divine some mode of engaging her in conversation?"

"Conversation!" replied the Earl; "why, ever since the shock of my first appearance was surmounted, she has contrived to vote me a nonentity; and that she may annihilate me completely, she has chosen, of all occupations, that of working a stocking! From what cursed old antediluvian, who lived before the invention of spinning-jennies, she learned this craft, Heaven only knows; but there she sits, with her work pinned to her knee—not the pretty taper silk fabric, with which Jeannette of Amiens coquetted, while Tristram Shandy was observing her progress; but a huge worsted bag, designed for some flat-footed old pauper, with heels like an elephant—And there she squats, counting all the stitches as she works, and refusing to speak, or listen, or look up, under pretence that it disturbs her calculation!"

"An elegant occupation, truly, and I wonder it does not work a cure upon her noble admirer," said Jekyl.

"Confound her—no—she shall not trick me. And then, amid this affectation of vulgar stolidity, there break out such sparkles of exultation, when she thinks she has succeeded in baffling her brother, and in plaguing me, that, by my faith, Hal, I could not tell, were it at my option, whether to kiss or to cuff her."

"You are determined to go on with this strange affair, then?" said Jekyl.

"On—on—on, my boy!—Clara and Nettlewood for ever!" answered the Earl. "Besides, this brother of hers provokes me too—he does not do for me half what he might—what he ought to do. He stands on point of honour, forsooth, this broken-down horse-jockey, who swallowed my two thousand pounds, as a pointer would a pat of butter. I can see he wishes to play fast and loose—has some suspicions, like you, Hal, upon the strength of my right to my father's titles and estate, as if, with the tithe of the Nettlewood property alone, I would not be too good a match for one of his beggarly family. He must scheme, forsooth, this half-baked Scotch cake!—He must hold off and on, and be cautious, and wait the result, and try conclusions with me, this lump of oatmeal dough!—I am much tempted to make an example of him in the course of my proceedings."

"Why, this is vengeance horrible and dire," said Jekyl;

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"yet I give up the brother to you; he is a conceited coxcomb, and deserves a lesson. But I would fain intercede for the sister."

"We shall see," replied the Earl; and then suddenly, "I tell you what it is, Hal; her caprices are so diverting, that I sometimes think out of mere contradiction, I almost love her; at least, if she would but clear old scores, and forget one unlucky prank of mine, it should be her own fault if I did not make her a happy woman."

CHAPTER THIRTY-SECOND

A DEATH-BED.

It comes—It wrings me in my parting hour,
The long-hid crime—the well-disguised guilt.
Bring me some holy priest to lay the spectre!

OLD PLAY.

THE general expectation of the company had been disappointed by the pacific termination of the meeting betwixt the Earl of Etherington and Tyrrel, the anticipation of which had created so deep a sensation. It had been expected that some appalling scene would have taken place; instead of which, each party seemed to acquiesce in a sullen neutrality, and leave the war to be carried on by their lawyers. It was generally understood that the cause was removed out of the courts of Bellona into that of Themis; and although the litigants continued to inhabit the same neighbourhood, and once or twice met at the public walks or public table, they took no notice of each other, farther than by exchanging on such occasions a grave and distant bow.

In the course of two or three days people ceased to take interest in a feud so coldly conducted; and if they thought of it at all, it was but to wonder that both the parties should persevere in residing near the Spa, and in chilling, with their unsocial behaviour, a party met together for the purposes of health and amusement.

But the brothers, as the reader is aware, however painful

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their occasional meetings might be, had the strongest reasons to remain in each other's neighbourhood—Lord Etherington to conduct his design upon Miss Mowbray, Tyrrel to disconcert his plan if possible, and both to await the answer which should be returned by the house in London, who were depositaries of the papers left by the late Earl.

Jekyl, anxious to assist his friend as much as possible, made in the meantime a visit to old Touchwood at the Aultoun, expecting to find him as communicative as he had formerly been on the subject of the quarrel betwixt the brothers, and trusting to discover, by dint of address, whence he had derived his information concerning the affairs of the noble house of Etherington. But the confidence which he had been induced to expect on the part of the old traveller was not reposed. Ferdinand Mendez Pinto, as the Earl called him, had changed his mind, or was not in the vein of communication. The only proof of his confidence worth mentioning, was his imparting to the young officer a valuable receipt for concocting curry-powder.

Jekyl was therefore reduced to believe that Touchwood, who appeared all his life to be a great intermeddler in other people's matters, had puzzled out the information which he appeared to possess of Lord Etherington's affairs, through some of those obscure sources whence very important secrets do frequently, to the astonishment and confusion of those whom they concern, escape to the public. He thought this the more likely, as Touchwood was by no means critically nice in his society, but was observed to converse as readily with a gentleman's gentleman, as with the gentleman to whom he belonged, and with a lady's attendant, as with the lady herself. He that will stoop to this sort of society, who is fond of tattle, being at the same time disposed to pay some consideration for gratification of his curiosity, and not over scrupulous respecting its accuracy, may always command a great quantity of private anecdote. Captain Jekyl naturally enough concluded, that this busy old man became in some degree master of other people's affairs by such correspondences as these; and he could himself bear witness to his success in cross-examination, as he had been surprised into an avowal of the rencontre between the brothers, by an insidious observation of the said Touchwood. He reported, therefore, to the Earl, after this interview, that, on the whole, he thought

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he had no reason to fear much on the subject of the traveller, who, though he had become acquainted, by some means or other, with some leading facts of his remarkable history, only possessed them in a broken, confused, and desultory manner, insomuch, that he seemed to doubt whether the parties in the expected lawsuit were brothers or cousins, and appeared totally ignorant of the facts on which it was to be founded.

It was the next day after this *éclaircissement* on the subject of Touchwood, that Lord Etherington dropped as usual into the bookseller's shop, got his papers, and skimming his eye over the shelf on which lay, till called for, the postponed letters, destined for the Aultoun, saw with a beating heart the smart post-mistress toss amongst them, with an air of sovereign contempt, a pretty large packet, addressed to Francis Tyrrel, Esq., etc. He withdrew his eyes, as if conscious that even to have looked on this important parcel might engender some suspicion of his purpose, or intimate the deep interest which he took in the contents of the missive which was so slightly treated by his friend Mrs. Pott. At this moment the door of the shop opened, and Lady Penelope Penfeather entered, with her eternal *pendante*, the little Miss Digges.

"Have you seen Mr. Mowbray?—Has Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's been down this morning?—Do you know anything of Mr. Mowbray, Mrs. Pott?" were questions which the lettered lady eagerly huddled on the back of each other, scarcely giving time to the lady of letters to return a decided negative to all and each of them.

"Mr. Mowbray was not about—was not coming there this morning—his servant had just called for letters and papers, and announced as much."

"Good Heaven! how unfortunate!" said Lady Penelope, with a deep sigh, and sinking down on one of the little sofas in an attitude of shocking desolation, which called the instant attention of Mr. Pott and his good woman, the first uncorking a small phial of salts, for he was a pharmacopolist as well as a vender of literature and transmitter of letters, and the other hastening for a glass of water. A strong temptation thrilled from Lord Etherington's eyes to his finger-ends. Two steps might have brought him within arm's-length of the unwatched packet, on the contents of which, in all probability, rested the hope and claims of his rival in honour and fortune; and, in

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to do in this sad affair—perhaps I have listened too much to the dictates of my own heart, which are apt to be so deceitful."

On the watch to get at something explanatory, yet afraid, by demanding it directly, to show that the previous tide of narrative and pathos had been lost on an inattentive ear, Lord Etherington could only say, that Lady Penelope could not err in acting according to the dictates of her own judgment.

Still the compliment had not sauce enough for the lady's sated palate; so, like a true glutton of praise, she began to help herself with the soup-ladle.

"Ah! judgment!—how is it you men know us so little, that you think we can pause to weigh sentiment in the balance of judgment?—that is expecting rather too much from us poor victims of our feelings. So that you must really hold me excused if I forgot the errors of this guilty and unhappy creature, when I looked upon her wretchedness—Not that I would have my little friend, Miss Digges, or your lordship, suppose that I am capable of palliating the fault, while I pity the poor miserable sinner. Oh, no—Walpole's verses express beautifully what one ought to feel on such occasions—

'For never was the gentle breast
Insensible to human woes;
Feeling, though firm, it melts distress'd
For weaknesses it never knows.'"

"Most accursed of all *précieuses*," thought his lordship, "when wilt thou, amidst all thy chatter, utter one word sounding like sense or information?"

But Lady Penelope went on—"If you knew, my lord, how I lament my limited means on those occasions! but I have gathered something among the good people at the Well. I asked that selfish wretch, Winterblossom, to walk down with me to view her distress, and the heartless beast told me he was afraid of infection!—infection from a puer—puerperal fever! I should not perhaps pronounce the word, but science is of no sex—however, I have always used thieves' vinegar essence, and never have gone farther than the threshold."

Whatever were Etherington's faults, he did not want charity, so far as it consists in giving alms.

"I am sorry," he said, taking out his purse, "your ladyship should not have applied to me."

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"Pardon me, my lord, we only beg from our friends; and your lordship is so constantly engaged with Lady Binks, that we have rarely the pleasure of seeing you in what I call *my* little circle."

Lord Etherington, without farther answer, tendered a couple of guineas, and observed, that the poor woman should have medical attendance.

"Why, so I say," answered Lady Penelope; "and I asked the brute Quackleben, who, I am sure, owes me some gratitude, to go and see her; but the sordid monster answered, 'Who was to pay him?'—He grows every day more intolerable, now that he seems sure of marrying that fat blowzy widow. He could not, I am sure, expect that I—out of my pittance—And besides, my lord, is there not a law that the parish, or the county, or the something or other, shall pay for physicking the poor?"

"We will find means to secure the Doctor's attendance," said Lord Etherington; "and I believe my best way will be to walk back to the Well, and send him to wait on the patient. I am afraid I can be of little use to a poor woman in a child-bed fever."

"Puerperal, my lord, puerperal," said Lady Penelope, in a tone of correction.

"In a puerperal fever, then," said Lord Etherington; "why, what can I do to help her?"

"Oh! my lord, you have forgotten that this Anne Heggie, that I told you of, came here with one child in her arms—and another—in short, about to become a mother again—and settled herself in this miserable hut I told you of—and some people think the minister should have sent her to her own parish; but he is a strange, soft-headed, sleepy sort of man, not over active in his parochial duties. However, there she settled, and there was something about her quite beyond the style of a common pauper, my lord—not at all the disgusting sort of person that you give a sixpence to while you look another way—but some one that seemed to have seen better days—one that, as Shakespeare says, could a tale unfold—though, indeed, I have never thoroughly learned her history—only, that to-day, as I called to know how she was, and sent my maid into her hut with some trifle, not worth mentioning, I find there is something hangs about her mind concerning the Mowbray family here of St.

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Ronan's—and my woman says the poor creature is dying, and is raving either for Mr. Mowbray or for some magistrate to receive a declaration; and so I have given you the trouble to come with me, that we may get out of the poor creature, if possible, whatever she has got to say.—I hope it is not murder—I hope not—though young St. Ronan's has been a strange, wild, daring, thoughtless creature—*sgherro insigne*, as the Italian says.—But here is the hut, my lord—pray, walk in."

The mention of St. Ronan's family, and of a secret relating to them, banished the thoughts which Lord Etherington began to entertain of leaving Lady Penelope to execute her works of devoted charity without his assistance. It was now with an interest equal to her own, that he stood before a most miserable hut, where the unfortunate female, her distresses not greatly relieved by Lady Penelope's ostentatious bounty, had resided both previous to her confinement, and since that event had taken place, with an old woman, one of the parish poor, whose miserable dole the minister had augmented, that she might have some means of assisting the stranger.

Lady Penelope lifted the latch and entered, after a momentary hesitation, which proceeded from a struggle betwixt her fear of infection, and her eager curiosity to know something, she could not guess what, that might affect the Mowbrays in their honour or fortunes. The latter soon prevailed, and she entered, followed by Lord Etherington. The lady, like other comforters of the cabins of the poor, proceeded to rebuke the grumbling old woman, for want of order and cleanliness—censured the food which was provided for the patient, and inquired particularly after the wine which she had left to make caudle with. The crone was not so dazzled with Lady Penelope's dignity or bounty as to endure her reprimand with patience. "They that had their bread to won wi' ae arm," she said, for the other hung powerless by her side, "had mair to do than to soop houses; if her leddyship wad let her ain idle quean of a lass take the besom, she might make the house as clean as she liked; and madam wad be a' the better of the exercise, and wad hae done, at least, ae turn of wark at the week's end."

"Do you hear the old hag, my lord?" said Lady Penelope. "Well, the poor are horrid ungrateful wretches.—And the wine, dame—the wine?"

"The wine!—there was hardly half-a-mutchkin, and puir,

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thin, fushionless skink it was—the wine was drunk out, ye may swear—we didna fling it ower our shouther—if ever we were to get good o't, it was by taking it naked, and no wi' your sugar and your slaisters—I wish, for ane, I had ne'er kend the sour smack o't. If the bedral hadna gien me a drap of usquebaugh, I might e'en hae died of your leddyship's liquor, for"——

Lord Etherington here interrupted the grumbling crone, thrusting some silver into her grasp, and at the same time begging her to be silent. The hag weighed the crown-piece in her hand, and crawled to her chimney-corner, muttering as she went,—"This is something like—this is something like—no like rinning into the house and out of the house, and geeing orders, like mistress and mair, and then a puir shilling again Saturday at e'en."

So saying, she sat down to her wheel, and seized, while she spun, her jet-black cutty pipe, from which she soon sent such clouds of vile mundungus vapour as must have cleared the premises of Lady Penelope, had she not been strong in purpose to share the expected confession of the invalid. As for Miss Digges, she coughed, sneezed, retched, and finally ran out of the cottage, declaring she could not live in such a smoke, if it were to hear twenty sick women's last speeches; and that, besides, she was sure to know all about it from Lady Penelope, if it was ever so little worth telling over again.

Lord Etherington was now standing beside the miserable flockbed, in which lay the poor patient, distracted, in what seemed to be her dying moments, with the peevish clamour of the elder infant, to which she could only reply by low moans, turning her looks as well as she could from its ceaseless whine, to the other side of her wretched couch, where lay the unlucky creature to which she had last given birth; its shivering limbs imperfectly covered with a blanket, its little features already swollen and bloated, and its eyes scarce open, apparently insensible to the evils of a state from which it seemed about to be speedily released.

"You are very ill, poor woman," said Lord Etherington; "I am told you desire a magistrate."

"It was Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's whom I desired to see—John Mowbray of St. Ronan's—the lady promised to bring him here."

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"I am not Mowbray of St. Ronan's," said Lord Etherington; "but I am a justice of peace, and a member of the legislature—I am, moreover, Mr. Mowbray's particular friend, if I can be of use to you in any of these capacities."

The poor woman remained long silent, and when she spoke it was doubtfully.

"Is my Lady Penelope Penfeather there?" she said, straining her darkened eyes.

"Her ladyship is present, and within hearing," said Lord Etherington.

"My case is the worse," answered the dying woman, for so she seemed, "if I must communicate such a secret as mine to a man of whom I know nothing, and a woman of whom I only know that she wants discretion."

"I—I want discretion!" said Lady Penelope; but at a signal from Lord Etherington she seemed to restrain herself; nor did the sick woman, whose powers of observation were greatly impaired, seem to be aware of the interruption. She spoke, notwithstanding her situation, with an intelligible and even emphatic voice; her manner in a great measure betraying the influence of the fever, and her tone and language seeming much superior to her most miserable condition.

"I am not the abject creature which I seem," she said; "at least, I was not born to be so. I wish I *were* that utter abject! I wish I were a wretched pauper of the lowest class—a starving vagabond—a wifeless mother—ignorance and insensibility would make me bear my lot like the outcast animal that dies patiently on the side of the common, where it has been half-starved during its life. But I—but I—born and bred to better things, have not lost the memory of them, and they make my present condition—my shame—my poverty—my infamy—the sight of my dying babes—the sense that my own death is coming fast on—they make these things a foretaste of hell!"

Lady Penelope's self-conceit and affectation were broken down by this fearful exordium. She sobbed, shuddered, and for once perhaps in her life, felt the real, not the assumed, necessity of putting her handkerchief to her eyes. Lord Etherington also was moved.

"Good woman," he said, "as far as relieving your personal wants can mitigate your distress, I will see that is fully performed, and that your poor children are attended to."

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"May God bless you!" said the poor woman, with a glance at the wretched forms beside her; "and may you," she added, after a momentary pause, "deserve the blessing of God, for it is bestowed in vain on those who are unworthy of it."

Lord Etherington felt, perhaps, a twinge of conscience; for he said, something hastily, "Pray go on, good woman, if you really have anything to communicate to me as a magistrate—it is time your condition was somewhat mended, and I will cause you to be cared for directly."

"Stop yet a moment," she said; "let me unload my conscience before I go hence, for no earthly relief will long avail to prolong my time here.—I was well born, the more my present shame! well educated, the greater my present guilt!—I was always, indeed, poor, but I felt not of the ills of poverty. I only thought of it when my vanity demanded idle and expensive gratification, for real wants I knew none. I was companion of a young lady of higher rank than my own, my relative, however, and one of such exquisite kindness of disposition, that she treated me as a sister, and would have shared with me all that she had on earth——I scarce think I can go farther with my story! something rises to my throat when I recollect how I rewarded her sisterly love!—I was elder than Clara—I should have directed her reading, and confirmed her understanding; but my own bent led me to peruse only works, which, though they burlesque nature, are seductive to the imagination. We read these follies together, until we had fashioned out for ourselves a little world of romance, and prepared ourselves for a maze of adventures. Clara's imaginations were as pure as those of angels; mine were—but it is unnecessary to tell them. The fiend, always watchful, presented a tempter at the moment when it was most dangerous."

She paused here, as if she found difficulty in expressing herself; and Lord Etherington, turning, with great appearance of interest, to Lady Penelope, began to inquire, "Whether it were quite agreeable to her ladyship to remain any longer an ear-witness of this unfortunate's confession?—it seems to be verging on some things—things that it might be unpleasant for your ladyship to hear."

"I was just forming the same opinion, my lord, and, to say truth, was about to propose to your lordship to withdraw, and leave me alone with the poor woman. My sex will make her

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necessary communications the more frank in your lordship's absence."

"True, madam; but then I am called here in my capacity of a magistrate."

"Hush!" said Lady Penelope; "she speaks."

"They say every woman that yields, makes herself a slave to her seducer; but I sold my liberty not to a man, but a demon! He made me serve him in his vile schemes against my friend and patroness—and oh! he found in me an agent too willing, from mere envy, to destroy the virtue which I had lost myself. Do not listen to me any more—Go, and leave me to my fate; I am the most detestable wretch that ever lived—detestable to myself worst of all, because even in my penitence there is a secret whisper that tells me, that were I as I have been, I would again act over all the wickedness I have done, and much worse. Oh! for Heaven's assistance, to crush the wicked thought!"

She closed her eyes, folded her emaciated hands, and held them upwards in the attitude of one who prays internally; presently the hands separated, and fell gently down on her miserable couch; but her eyes did not open, nor was there the slightest sign of motion on the features. Lady Penelope shrieked faintly, hid her eyes, and hurried back from the bed, while Lord Etherington, his looks darkening with a complication of feelings, remained gazing on the poor woman, as if eager to discern whether the spark of life was totally extinct. Her grim old assistant hurried to the bedside, with some spirits in a broken glass.

"Have ye no had pennyworths for your charity?" she said, in spiteful scorn. "Ye buy the very life o' us wi' your shillings and sixpences, your groats and your boddles—ye hae garr'd the puir wretch speak till she swarfs, and now ye stand as if ye never saw a woman in a dwam before. Let me till her wi' the dram—mony words mickle drought, ye ken—Stand out o' my gate, my leddy, if sae be that ye are a leddy; there is little use of the like of you when there is death in the pot."

Lady Penelope, half affronted, but still more frightened by the manners of the old hag, now gladly embraced Lord Etherington's renewed offer to escort her from the hut. He left it not, however, without bestowing an additional gratuity on the old woman, who received it with a whining benediction.

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"The Almighty guide your course through the troubles of this wicked warld—and the muckle deevil blaw wind in your sails," she added, in her natural tone, as the guests vanished from her miserable threshold—"A wheen cork-headed, barmy-brained gowks! that wunna let puir folk sae muckle as die in quiet, wi' their sossings and their soopings." *

"This poor creature's declaration," said Lord Etherington to Lady Penelope, "seems to refer to matters which the law has nothing to do with, and which, perhaps, as they seem to implicate the peace of a family of respectability, and the character of a young lady, we ought to inquire no farther after."

"I differ from your lordship," said Lady Penelope; "I differ extremely—I suppose you guess whom her discourse touched upon?"

"Indeed, your ladyship does my acuteness by far too much honour."

"Did she not mention a Christian name?" said Lady Penelope; "your lordship is strangely dull this morning?"

"A Christian name?—No, none that I heard—yes, she said something about—a Catherine, I think it was."

"Catherine?" answered the lady; "no, my lord, it was Clara—rather a rare name in this country, and belonging, I think, to a young lady of whom your lordship should know something, unless your evening flirtations with Lady Binks have blotted entirely out of your memory your morning visits to Shaws Castle. You are a bold man, my lord. I would advise you to include Mrs. Blower among the objects of your attention, and then you will have maid, wife, and widow upon your list."

"Upon my honour, your ladyship is too severe," said Lord Etherington; "you surround yourself every evening with all that is clever and accomplished among the people here, and then you ridicule a poor secluded monster, who dare not approach your charmed circle, because he seeks for some amusement elsewhere. This is to tyrannise and not to reign—it is Turkish despotism!"

"Ah! my lord, I know you well, my lord," said Lady Penelope—"Sorry would your lordship be, had you not power to render yourself welcome to any circle which you may please to approach."

* Note G. Parochial charity.

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"That is to say," answered the lord, "you will pardon me if I intrude on your ladyship's coterie this evening?"

"There is no society which Lord Etherington can think of frequenting, where he will not be a welcome guest."

"I will plead, then, at once my pardon and privilege this evening—And now" (speaking as if he had succeeded in establishing some confidence with her ladyship), "what do you really think of this blind story?"

"Oh, I must believe it concerns Miss Mowbray. She was always an odd girl—something about her I could never endure—a sort of effrontery—that is, perhaps, a harsh word, but a kind of assurance—an air of confidence—so that, though I kept on a footing with her because she was an orphan girl of good family, and because I really knew nothing positively bad of her, yet she sometimes absolutely shocked me."

"Your ladyship, perhaps, would not think it right to give publicity to the story? at least till you know exactly what it is," said the Earl, in a tone of suggestion.

"Depend upon it, that it is quite the worst, the very worst—You heard the woman say that she had exposed Clara to ruin—and you know she must have meant Clara Mowbray, because she was so anxious to tell the story to her brother, St. Ronan's."

"Very true—I did not think of that," answered Lord Etherington; "still it would be hard on the poor girl if it should get abroad."

"Oh, it will never get abroad for me," said Lady Penelope; "I would not tell the very wind of it. But then I cannot meet Miss Mowbray as formerly—I have a station in life to maintain, my lord—and I am under the necessity of being select in my society—it is a duty I owe the public, if it were even not my own inclination."

"Certainly, my Lady Penelope," said Lord Etherington; "but then consider that, in a place where all eyes are necessarily observant of your ladyship's behaviour, the least coldness on your part to Miss Mowbray—and, after all, we have nothing like assurance of anything being wrong there—would ruin her with the company here, and with the world at large."

"Oh! my lord," answered Lady Penelope, "as for the truth of the story, I have some private reasons of my own for 'holding the strange tale devoutly true;' for I had a mysterious hint

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from a very worthy, but a very singular man (your lordship knows how I adore originality), the clergyman of the parish, who made me aware there was something wrong about Miss Clara—something that—your lordship will excuse my speaking more plainly—Oh, no—I fear—I fear it is all too true—You know Mr. Cargill, I suppose, my lord?"

"Yes—no—I—I think I have seen him," said Lord Etherington. "But how came the lady to make the parson her father-confessor?—they have no auricular confession in the Kirk—it must have been with the purpose of marriage, I presume—let us hope that it took place—perhaps it really was so—did he, Cargill—the minister, I mean—say anything of such a matter?"

"Not a word—not a word—I see where you are, my lord; you would put a good face on't.

> 'They call'd it marriage, by that specious name
> To veil the crime, and sanctify the shame.'

Queen Dido for that. How the clergyman came into the secret I cannot tell—he is a very close man.—But I know he will not hear of Miss Mowbray being married to any one, unquestionably because he knows that, in doing so, she would introduce disgrace into some honest family—and truly, I am much of his mind, my lord."

"Perhaps Mr. Cargill may know the lady is privately married already," said the Earl; "I think that is the more natural inference, begging your ladyship's pardon for presuming to differ in opinion."

Lady Penelope seemed determined not to take this view of the case.

"No, no—no, I tell you," she replied; "she cannot be married, for if she were married, how could the poor wretch say that she was ruined?—You know there is a difference betwixt ruin and marriage."

"Some people are said to have found them synonymous, Lady Penelope," answered the Earl.

"You are smart on me, my lord; but still, in common parlance, when we say a woman is ruined, we mean quite the contrary of her being married—it is impossible for me to be more explicit upon such a topic, my lord."

"I defer to your ladyship's better judgment," said Lord Etherington. "I only entreat you to observe a little caution in this

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business—I will make the strictest inquiries of this woman, and acquaint you with the result; and I hope, out of regard to the respectable family of St. Ronan's, your ladyship will be in no hurry to intimate anything to Miss Mowbray's prejudice."

"I certainly am no person to spread scandal, my lord," answered the lady, drawing herself up; "at the same time, I must say, the Mowbrays have little claim on me for forbearance. I am sure I was the first person to bring this Spa into fashion, which has been a matter of such consequence to their estate; and yet Mr. Mowbray set himself against me, my lord, in every possible sort of way, and encouraged the underbred people about him to behave very strangely.—There was the business of building the Belvidere, which he would not permit to be done out of the stock-purse of the company, because I had given the workmen the plan and the orders—and then, about the tea-room—and the hour for beginning dancing—and about the subscription for Mr. Rymour's new Tale of Chivalry—in short, I owe no consideration to Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's."

"But the poor young lady," said Lord Etherington.

"Oh! the poor young lady?—the poor young lady can be as saucy as a rich young lady, I promise you.—There was a business in which she used me scandalously, Lord Etherington—it was about a very trifling matter—a shawl. Nobody minds dress less than I do, my lord; I thank Heaven my thoughts turn upon very diff rent topics—but it is in trifles that disrespect and unkindness are shown; and I have had a full share of both from Miss Clara, besides a good deal of impertinence from her brother upon the same subject."

"There is but one way remains," thought the Earl, as they approached the Spa, "and that is to work on the fears of this d—d vindictive blue-stocking'd wild-cat.—Your ladyship," he said aloud, "is aware what severe damages have been awarded in late cases where something approaching to scandal has been traced to ladies of consideration—the privileges of the tea-table have been found insufficient to protect some fair critics against the consequences of too frank and liberal animadversion upon the characters of their friends. So pray, remember, that as yet we know very little on this subject."

Lady Penelope loved money, and feared the law; and this hint, fortified by her acquaintance with Mowbray's love of his sister, and his irritable and revengeful disposition, brought her

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in a moment much nearer the temper in which Lord Etherington wished to leave her. She protested that no one could be more tender than she of the fame of the unfortunate, even supposing their guilt was fully proved—promised caution on the subject of the pauper's declaration, and hoped Lord Etherington would join her tea-party early in the evening, as she wished to make him acquainted with one or two of her *protegés*, whom, she was sure, his lordship would find deserving of his advice and countenance. Being by this time at the door of her own apartment, her ladyship took leave of the Earl with a most gracious smile.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THIRD.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

On the lee-beam lies the land, boys,
  See all clear to reef each course;
Let the fore-sheet go, don't mind, boys,
  Though the weather should be worse.

THE STORM.

"IT darkens round me like a tempest," thought Lord Etherington, as, with slow step, folded arms, and his white hat slouched over his brows, he traversed the short interval of space betwixt his own apartments and those of the Lady Penelope. In a buck of the old school, one of Congreve's men of wit and pleasure about town, this would have been a departure from character; but the present fine man does not derogate from his quality, even by exhibiting all the moody and gentlemanlike solemnity of Master Stephen. So, Lord Etherington was at liberty to carry on his reflections, without attracting observation.—"I have put a stopper into the mouth of that old vinegar-cruet of quality, but the acidity of her temper will soon dissolve the charm—And what to do?"

As he looked round him, he saw his trusty valet Solmes, who, touching his hat with due respect, said, as he passed him, "Your Lordship's letters are in your private despatch-box."

Simple as these words were, and indifferent the tone in which they were spoken, their import made Lord Etherington's heart bound as if his fate had depended on the accents. He intimated

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no farther interest in the communication, however, than to desire Solmes to be below, in case he should ring; and with these words entered his apartment, and barred and bolted the door, even before he looked on the table where his despatch-box was placed.

Lord Etherington had, as is usual, one key to the box which held his letters, his confidential servant being intrusted with the other; so that, under the protection of a patent lock, his despatches escaped all risk of being tampered with—a precaution not altogether unnecessary on the part of those who frequent hotels and lodging-houses.

"By your leave, Mr. Bramah," said the Earl, as he applied the key, jesting, as it were, with his own agitation, as he would have done with that of a third party. The lid was raised, and displayed the packet, the appearance and superscription of which had attracted his observation but a short while since in the post-office. *Then* he would have given much to be possessed of the opportunity which was now in his power; but many pause on the brink of a crime, who have contemplated it at a distance without scruple. Lord Etherington's first impulse had led him to poke the fire; and he held in his hand the letter which he was more than half tempted to commit, without even breaking the seal, to the fiery element. But, though sufficiently familiarised with guilt, he was not as yet acquainted with it in its basest shapes—he had not yet acted with meanness, or at least with what the world terms such. He had been a duellist, the manners of the age authorised it—a libertine, the world excused it to his youth and condition—a bold and successful gambler, for that quality he was admired and envied; and a thousand other inaccuracies, to which these practices and habits lead, were easily slurred over in a man of quality, with fortune and spirit to support his rank. But his present meditated act was of a different kind. Tell it not in Bond Street, whisper it not on St. James's pavement!—it amounted to an act of petty larceny, for which the code of honour would admit of no composition.

Lord Etherington, under the influence of these recollections, stood for a few minutes suspended—But the devil always finds logic to convince his followers. He recollected the wrong done to his mother, and to himself, her offspring, to whom his father had, in the face of the whole world, imparted the hereditary rights, of which he was now, by a posthumous deed, endeavour-

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ing to deprive the memory of the one, and the expectations of the other. Surely, the right being his own, he had a full title, by the most effectual means, whatever such means might be, to repel all attacks on that right, and even destroy, if necessary, the documents by which his enemies were prosecuting their unjust plans against his honour and interest.

This reasoning prevailed, and Lord Etherington again held the devoted packet above the flames; when it occurred to him, that, his resolution being taken, he ought to carry it into execution as effectually as possible; and to do so, it was necessary to know that the packet actually contained the papers which he was desirous to destroy.

Never did a doubt arise in juster time; for no sooner had the seal burst and the envelope rustled under his fingers, than he perceived, to his utter consternation, that he held in his hand only the copies of the deeds for which Francis Tyrrel had written, the originals of which he had too sanguinely concluded would be forwarded according to his requisition. A letter from a partner of the house with which they were deposited stated that they had not felt themselves at liberty, in the absence of the head of their firm, to whom these papers had been committed, to part with them even to Mr. Tyrrel, though they had proceeded so far as to open the parcel, and now transmitted to him formal copies of the papers contained in it, which they presumed would serve Mr. Tyrrel's purpose for consulting counsel or the like. They themselves, in a case of so much delicacy, and in the absence of their principal partner, were determined to retain the originals, unless called to produce them in a court of justice.

With a solemn imprecation on the formality and absurdity of the writer, Lord Etherington let the letter of advice drop from his hand into the fire, and, throwing himself into a chair, passed his hand across his eyes, as if their very power of sight had been blighted by what he had read. His title and his paternal fortune, which he thought but an instant before might be rendered unchallengeable by a single movement of his hand, seemed now on the verge of being lost for ever. His rapid recollection failed not to remind him of what was less known to the world, that his early and profuse expenditure had greatly dilapidated his maternal fortune; and that the estate of Nettlewood, which five minutes ago he only coveted as a

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wealthy man desires increase of his store, must now be acquired, if he would avoid being a poor and embarrassed spendthrift. To impede his possessing himself of this property, fate had restored to the scene the penitent of the morning, who, as he had too much reason to believe, was returned to this neighbourhood, to do justice to Clara Mowbray, and who was not unlikely to put the whole story of the marriage on its right footing. She, however, might be got rid of; and it might still be possible to hurry Miss Mowbray, by working on her fears, or through the agency of her brother, into a union with him while he still preserved the title of Lord Etherington. This, therefore, he resolved to secure, if effort or if intrigue could carry the point; nor was it the least consideration, that should he succeed, he would obtain over Tyrrel, his successful rival, such a triumph as would be sufficient to embitter the tranquillity of his whole life.

In a few minutes his rapid and contriving invention had formed a plan for securing the sole advantage which seemed to remain open for him; and, conscious that he had no time to lose, he entered immediately upon the execution.

The bell summoned Solmes to his lordship's apartment, when the Earl, as coolly as if he had hoped to dupe his experienced valet by such an assertion, said, "You have brought me a packet designed for some man at the Aultoun—let it be sent to him—Stay, I will re-seal it first."

He accordingly re-sealed the packet, containing all the writings, excepting the letter of advice (which he had burnt), and gave it to the valet, with the caution, "I wish you would not make such blunders in future."

"I beg your lordship's pardon—I will take better care again—thought it was addressed to your lordship."

So answered Solmes, too knowing to give the least intelligence, far less to remind the Earl that his own directions had occasioned the mistake of which he complained.

"Solmes," continued the Earl, "you need not mention your blunder at the post-office; it would only occasion tattle in this idle place—but be sure that the gentleman has his letter. And, Solmes, I see Mr. Mowbray walk across—ask him to dine with me to-day at five. I have a headache, and cannot face the clamour of the savages who feed at the public table. And—let me see—make my compliments to Lady Penelope

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Penfeather—I will certainly have the honour of waiting on her ladyship this evening to tea, agreeably to her very boring invitation received—write her a proper card, and word it your own way. Bespeak dinner for two, and see you have some of that batch of Burgundy."

The servant was retiring, when his master added, "Stay a moment—I have a more important business than I have yet mentioned. Solmes, you have managed devilish ill about the woman Irwin!"

"I, my lord?" answered Solmes.

"Yes, you, sir—did you not tell me she had gone to the West Indies with a friend of yours, and did not I give them a couple of hundred pounds for passage-money?"

"Yes, my lord," replied the valet.

"Ay, but now it proves *no*, my lord," said Lord Etherington; "for she has found her way back to this country in miserable plight—half-starved, and, no doubt, willing to do or say anything for a livelihood—How has this happened?"

"Biddulph must have taken her cash and turned her loose, my lord," answered Solmes, as if he had been speaking of the most commonplace transaction in the world; "but I know the woman's nature so well, and am so much master of her history, that I can carry her off the country in twenty-four hours, and place her where she will never think of returning, provided your lordship can spare me so long."

"About it directly—but I can tell you, that you will find the woman in a very penitential humour, and very ill in health to boot."

"I am sure of my game," answered Solmes; "with submission to your lordship, I think if death and her good angel had hold of one of that woman's arms, the devil and I could make a shift to lead her away by the other."

"Away, and about it, then," said Etherington. "But, hark ye, Solmes, be kind to her, and see all her wants relieved. I have done her mischief enough—though nature and the devil had done half the work to my hand."

Solmes at length was permitted to withdraw to execute his various commissions, with an assurance that his services would not be wanted for the next twenty-four hours.

"Soh!" said the Earl, as his agent withdrew, "there is a spring put in motion which, well oiled, will move the whole

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machine—And here, in lucky time, comes Harry Jekyl—I hear his whistle on the stairs. There is a silly lightness of heart about that fellow, which I envy while I despise it; but he is welcome now, for I want him."

Jekyl entered accordingly, and broke out with, "I am glad to see one of your fellows laying a cloth for two in your parlour, Etherington—I was afraid you were going down among these confounded bores again to-day."

"*You* are not to be one of the two, Hal," answered Lord Etherington.

"No?—then I may be a third, I hope, if not second?"

"Neither first, second, nor third, Captain. The truth is, I want a *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's," replied the Earl: "and, besides, I have to beg the very particular favour of you to go again to that fellow Martigny. It is time that he should produce his papers, if he has any—of which, for one, I do not believe a word. He has had ample time to hear from London; and I think I have delayed long enough in an important matter upon his bare assertion."

"I cannot blame your impatience," said Jekyl, "and I will go on your errand instantly. As you waited on my advice, I am bound to find an end to your suspense. At the same time, if the man is not possessed of such papers as he spoke of, I must own he is happy in a command of consummate assurance which might set up the whole roll of attorneys."

"You will be soon able to judge of that," said Lord Etherington; "and now, off with you—Why do you look at me so anxiously?"

"I cannot tell—I have strange forebodings about this *tête-à tête* with Mowbray. You should spare him, Etherington, —he is not your match—wants both judgment and temper."

"Tell him so, Jekyl," answered the Earl, "and his proud Scotch stomach will be up in an instant, and he will pay you with a shot for your pains.—Why, he thinks himself Cock of the walk, this strutting bantam, notwithstanding the lesson I gave him before—And what do you think?—he has the impudence to talk about my attentions to Lady Binks as inconsistent with the prosecution of my suit to his sister! Yes, Hal—this awkward Scotch laird, that has scarce tact enough to make love to a ewe-milker, or, at best, to some daggletailed soubrette, has the assurance to start himself as my rival!"

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"Then, good-night to St. Ronan's!—this will be a fatal dinner to him.—Etherington, I know by that laugh you are bent on mischief—I have a great mind to give him a hint."

"I wish you would," answered the Earl; "it would all turn to my account."

"Do you defy me?—Well, if I meet him, I will put him on his guard."

The friends parted; and it was not long ere Jekyl encountered Mowbray on one of the public walks.

"You dine with Etherington to-day?" said the Captain—"Forgive me, Mr. Mowbray, if I say one single word—Beware."

"Of what should I beware, Captain Jekyl," answered Mowbray, "when I dine with a friend of your own, and a man of honour?"

"Certainly Lord Etherington is both, Mr. Mowbray; but he loves play, and is too hard for most people."

"I thank you for your hint, Captain Jekyl—I am a raw Scottishman, it is true; but yet I know a thing or two. Fair play is always presumed amongst gentlemen; and, that taken for granted, I have the vanity to think I need no one's caution on the subject, not even Captain Jekyl's, though his experience must needs be so much superior to mine."

"In that case, sir," said Jekyl, bowing coldly, "I have no more to say, and I hope there is no harm done.—Conceited coxcomb!" he added, mentally, as they parted, "how truly did Etherington judge of him, and what an ass was I to intermeddle!—I hope Etherington will strip him of every feather."

He pursued his walk in quest of Tyrrel, and Mowbray proceeded to the apartments of the Earl, in a temper of mind well suited to the purposes of the latter, who judged of his disposition accurately when he permitted Jekyl to give his well-meant warning. To be supposed, by a man of acknowledged fashion, so decidedly inferior to his antagonist—to be considered as an object of compassion, and made the subject of a good-boy warning, was gall and bitterness to his proud spirit, which, the more that he felt a conscious inferiority in the arts which they all cultivated, struggled the more to preserve the footing of at least apparent equality.

Since the first memorable party at piquet, Mowbray had never hazarded his luck with Lord Etherington, except for trifling stakes; but his conceit led him to suppose that he now

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fully understood his play, and, agreeably to the practice of those who have habituated themselves to gambling, he had, every now and then, felt a yearning to try for his revenge. He wished also to be out of Lord Etherington's debt, feeling galled under a sense of pecuniary obligation, which hindered his speaking his mind to him fully upon the subject of his flirtation with Lady Binks, which he justly considered as an insult to his family, considering the footing on which the Earl seemed desirous to stand with Clara Mowbray. From these obligations a favourable evening might free him, and Mowbray was, in fact, indulging in a waking dream to this purpose, when Jekyl interrupted him. His untimely warning only excited a spirit of contradiction, and a determination to show the adviser how little he was qualified to judge of his talents; and in this humour, his ruin, which was the consequence of that afternoon, was far from even seeming to be the premeditated, or even the voluntary, work of the Earl of Etherington.

On the contrary, the victim himself was the first to propose play—deep play—double stakes; while Lord Etherington, on the other hand, often proposed to diminish their game, or to break off entirely; but it was always with an affectation of superiority, which only stimulated Mowbray to farther and more desperate risks; and, at last, when Mowbray became his debtor to an overwhelming amount (his circumstances considered), the Earl threw down the cards, and declared he should be too late for Lady Penelope's tea-party, to which he was positively engaged.

"Will you not give me my revenge?" said Mowbray, taking up the cards, and shuffling them with fierce anxiety.

"Not now, Mowbray; we have played too long already—you have lost too much—more than perhaps is convenient for you to pay."

Mowbray gnashed his teeth, in spite of his resolution to maintain an exterior, at least, of firmness.

"You can take your time you know," said the Earl; "a note of hand will suit me as well as the money."

"No, by G—!" answered Mowbray, "I will not be so taken in a second time—I had better have sold myself to the devil than to your lordship—I have never been my own man since."

"These are not very kind expressions, Mowbray," said the

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Earl; "you *would* play, and they that will play must expect sometimes to lose"——

"And they who win will expect to be paid," said Mowbray, breaking in. "I know that as well as you, my lord, and you shall be paid—I will pay you—I will pay you, by G—! Do you make any doubt that I will pay you, my lord?"

"You look as if you thought of paying me in sharp coin," said Lord Etherington; "and I think that would scarce be consistent with the terms we stand upon towards each other."

"By my soul," said Mowbray, "I cannot tell what these terms are; and to be at my wit's end at once, I should be glad to know. You set out upon paying addresses to my sister, and with your visits and opportunities at Shaws Castle, I cannot find the matter makes the least progress—it keeps moving without advancing, like a child's rocking-horse. Perhaps you think that you have curbed me up so tightly that I dare not stir in the matter; but you will find it otherwise.—Your lordship may keep a haram if you will, but my sister shall not enter it."

"You are angry, and therefore you are unjust," said Etherington; "you know well enough it is your sister's fault that there is any delay. I am most willing—most desirous to call her Lady Etherington—nothing but her unlucky prejudices against me have retarded a union which I have so many reasons for desiring."

"Well," replied Mowbray, "that shall be my business. I know no reason she can pretend to decline a marriage so honourable to her house, and which is approved of by me, that house's head. That matter shall be arranged in twenty-four hours."

"It will do me the most sensible pleasure," said Lord Etherington; "you shall soon see how sincerely I desire your alliance; and as for the trifle you have lost"——

"It is no trifle to me, my lord—it is my ruin—but it shall be paid—and let me tell your lordship, you may thank your good luck for it more than your good play."

"We will say no more of it at present, if you please," said Lord Etherington, "to-morrow is a new day; and if you will take my advice, you will not be too harsh with your sister. A little firmness is seldom amiss with young women, but severity"——

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"I will pray your lordship to spare me your advice on this subject. However valuable it may be in other respects, I can, I take it, speak to my own sister in my own way."

"Since you are so caustically disposed, Mowbray," answered the Earl, "I presume you will not honour her ladyship's tea-table to-night, though I believe it will be the last of the season?"

"And why should you think so, my lord?" answered Mowbray, whose losses had rendered him testy and contradictory upon every subject that was started. "Why should not I pay my respects to Lady Penelope, or any other tabby of quality? I have no title, indeed; but I suppose that my family"——

"Entitles you to become a canon of Strasburg, doubtless—But you do not seem in a very Christian mood for taking orders. All I meant to say was, that you and Lady Pen were not used to be on such a good footing."

"Well, she sent me a card for her blow-out," said Mowbray; "and so I am resolved to go. When I have been there half-an-hour, I will ride up to Shaws Castle, and you shall hear of my speed in wooing for you to-morrow morning."

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOURTH.

A TEA-PARTY.

Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round;
And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer, but not inebriate, wait on each,
Thus let us welcome peaceful evening in.

COWPER'S TASK.

THE approach of the cold and rainy season had now so far thinned the company at the Well, that, in order to secure the necessary degree of crowd upon her tea-nights, Lady Penelope was obliged to employ some coaxing towards those whom she had considered as much under par in society. Even the Doctor and Mrs. Blower were graciously smiled upon—for their marriage was now an arranged affair; and the event was of a nature likely to spread the reputation of the Spa among

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wealthy widows, and medical gentlemen of more skill than practice. So in they came, the Doctor smirking, gallanting, and performing all the bustling parade of settled and arranged courtship, with much of that grace wherewith a turkey-cock goes through the same ceremony. Old Touchwood had also attended her ladyship's summons, chiefly, it may be supposed, from his restless fidgety disposition, which seldom suffered him to remain absent even from those places of resort of which he usually professed his detestation. There was, besides, Mr. Winterblossom, who, in his usual spirit of quiet epicurism and quiet self-indulgence, was, under the fire of a volley of compliments to Lady Penelope, scheming to secure for himself an early cup of tea. There was Lady Binks also, with the wonted degree of sullenness in her beautiful face, angry at her husband as usual, and not disposed to be pleased with Lord Etherington for being absent when she desired to excite Sir Bingo's jealousy. This she had discovered to be the most effectual way of tormenting the Baronet, and she rejoiced in it with the savage glee of a hackney coachman, who has found a *raw*, where he can make his poor jade feel the whip. The rest of the company were also in attendance as usual. MacTurk himself was present, notwithstanding that he thought it an egregious waste of hot water, to bestow it upon compounding any mixture, saving punch. He had of late associated himself a good deal with the traveller; not that they by any means resembled each other in temper or opinions, but rather because there was that degree of difference betwixt them which furnished perpetual subject for dispute and discussion. They were not long, on the present occasion, ere they lighted on a fertile source of controversy.

"Never tell me of your points of honour," said Touchwood, raising his voice altogether above the general tone of polite conversation—"all humbug, Captain MacTurk—mere hair-traps to springe woodcocks—men of sense break through them."

"Upon my word, sir," said the Captain, "and myself is surprised to hear you—for, look you, sir, every man's honour is the breath of his nostrils—Cot tamn!"

"Then let men breathe through their mouths and be d—d," returned the controversialist. "I tell you, sir, that, besides its being forbidden, both by law and gospel, it's an idiotical and totally absurd practice, that of duelling. An honest savage has more sense than to practise it—he takes his

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bow or his gun, as the thing may be, and shoots his enemy from behind a bush. And a very good way; for you see there can, in that case, be only one man's death between them."

"Saul of my body, sir," said the Captain, "gin ye promulgate sic doctrines among the good company, it's my belief you will bring somebody to the gallows."

"Thank ye, Captain, with all my heart; but I stir up no quarrels—I leave war to them that live by it. I only say, that, except our old, stupid ancestors in the north-west here, I know no country so silly as to harbour this custom of duelling. It is unknown in Africa, among the negroes—in America."

"Don't tell me that," said the Captain; "a Yankee will fight with muskets and buck-shot, rather than sit still with an affront. I should know Jonathan, I think."

"Altogether unknown among the thousand tribes of India."

"I'll be tamned, then!" said Captain MacTurk. "Was I not in Tippoo's prison at Bangalore? and, when the joyful day of our liberation came, did we not solemnise it with fourteen little affairs, whereof we had been laying the foundation in our house of captivity, as Holy Writ has it, and never went farther to settle them than the glacis of the fort? By my soul, you would have thought there was a smart skirmish, the firing was so close; and did not I, Captain MacTurk, fight three of them myself, without moving my foot from the place I set it on?"

"And pray, sir, what might be the result of this Christian mode of giving thanks for your deliverance?" demanded Mr. Touchwood.

"A small list of casualties, after all," said the Captain; "one killed on the spot, one died of his wounds—two wounded severely—three ditto slightly, and little Duncan Macphail reported missing. We were out of practice, after such long confinement. So you see how we managed matters in India, my dear friend."

"You are to understand," replied Touchwood, "that I spoke only of the heathen natives, who, heathen as they are, live in the light of their own moral reason, and among whom ye shall therefore see better examples of practical morality than among such as yourselves; who, though calling yourselves Christians, have no more knowledge of the true acceptation and meaning

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of your religion than if you had left your Christianity at the Cape of Good Hope, as they say of you, and forgot to take it up when you came back again."

"Py Cot! and I can tell you, sir," said the Captain, elevating at once his voice and his nostrils, and snuffing the air with a truculent and indignant visage, "that I will not permit you or any man to throw any such scandal on my character. I thank Cot, I can bring good witness that I am as good a Christian as another, for a poor sinner, as the best of us are; and I am ready to justify my religion with my sword—Cot tamn!—Compare my own self with a parcel of black heathen bodies and natives, that were never in the inner side of a kirk whilst they lived, but go about worshipping stocks and stones, and swinging themselves upon bamboos, like peasts, as they are!"

An indignant growling in his throat, which sounded like the acquiescence of his inward man in the indignant proposition which his external organs thus expressed, concluded this haughty speech, which, however, made not the least impression on Touchwood, who cared as little for angry tones and looks as he did for fine speeches. So that it is likely a quarrel between the Christian preceptor and the peacemaker might have occurred for the amusement of the company, had not the attention of both, but particularly that of Touchwood, been diverted from the topic of debate by the entrance of Lord Etherington and Mowbray.

The former was, as usual, all grace, smiles, and gentleness. Yet, contrary to his wonted custom, which usually was, after a few general compliments, to attach himself particularly to Lady Binks, the Earl, on the present occasion, avoided the side of the room on which that beautiful but sullen idol held her station, and attached himself exclusively to Lady Penelope Penfeather, enduring, without flinching, the strange variety of conceited *bavardage*, which that lady's natural parts and acquired information enabled her to pour forth with unparalleled profusion.

An honest heathen, one of Plutarch's heroes if I mistake not, dreamed once upon a night, that the figure of Proserpina, whom he had long worshipped, visited his slumbers with an angry and vindictive countenance, and menaced him with vengeance, in resentment of his having neglected her altars, with the usual fickleness of a Polytheist, for those of some

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more fashionable divinity. Not that goddess of the infernal regions herself could assume a more haughty or more displeased countenance than that with which Lady Binks looked from time to time upon Lord Etherington, as if to warn him of the consequence of this departure from the allegiance which the young Earl had hitherto manifested towards her, and which seemed now, she knew not why, unless it were for the purpose of public insult, to be transferred to her rival. Perilous as her eye-glances were, and much as they menaced, Lord Etherington felt at this moment the importance of soothing Lady Penelope to silence on the subject of the invalid's confession of that morning, to be more pressing than that of appeasing the indignation of Lady Binks. The former was a case of the most urgent necessity—the latter, if he was at all anxious on the subject, might, he perhaps thought, be trusted to time. Had the ladies continued on a tolerable footing together, he might have endeavoured to conciliate both. But the bitterness of their long-suppressed feud had greatly increased, now that it was probable the end of the season was to separate them, in all likelihood for ever; so that Lady Penelope had no longer any motive for countenancing Lady Binks, or the lady of Sir Bingo for desiring Lady Penelope's countenance. The wealth and lavish expense of the one was no longer to render more illustrious the suit of her right honourable friend, nor was the society of Lady Penelope likely to be soon again useful or necessary to Lady Binks. So that neither were any longer desirous to suppress symptoms of the mutual contempt and dislike which they had long nourished for each other; and whoever should, in this decisive hour, take part with one, had little henceforward to expect from her rival. What farther and more private reasons Lady Binks might have to resent the defection of Lord Etherington, have never come with certainty to our knowledge; but it was said there had been high words between them on the floating report that his lordship's visits to Shaws Castle were dictated by the wish to find a bride there.

Women's wits are said to be quick in spying the surest means of avenging a real or supposed slight. After biting her pretty lips, and revolving in her mind the readiest means of vengeance, fate threw in her way young Mowbray of St. Ronan's. She looked at him, and endeavoured to fix his attention with a nod and gracious smile, such as in an ordi

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nary mood would have instantly drawn him to her side. On receiving in answer only a vacant glance and a bow, she was led to observe him more attentively, and was induced to believe, from his wavering look, varying complexion, and unsteady step, that he had been drinking unusually deep. Still his eye was less that of an intoxicated than of a disturbed and desperate man, one whose faculties were engrossed by deep and turbid reflection, which withdrew him from the passing scene.

"Do you observe how ill Mr. Mowbray looks?" said she, in a loud whisper; "I hope he has not heard what Lady Penelope was just now saying of his family?"

"Unless he hears it from you, my lady," answered Mr. Touchwood, who, upon Mowbray's entrance, had broken off his discourse with MacTurk, "I think there is little chance of his learning it from any other person."

"What is the matter?" said Mowbray, sharply, addressing Chatterly and Winterblossom; but the one shrunk nervously from the question, protesting, he indeed had not been precisely attending to what had been passing among the ladies, and Winterblossom bowed out of the scrape with quiet and cautious politeness—"He really had not given particular attention to what was passing—I was negotiating with Mrs. Jones for an additional lump of sugar to my coffee. Egad, it was so difficult a piece of diplomacy," he added, sinking his voice, "that I have an idea her ladyship calculates the West India produce by grains and pennyweights."

The innuendo, if designed to make Mowbray smile, was far from succeeding. He stepped forward, with more than usual stiffness in his air, which was never entirely free from self-consequence, and said to Lady Binks, "May I request to know of your ladyship what particular respecting my family had the honour to engage the attention of the company?"

"I was only a listener, Mr. Mowbray," returned Lady Binks, with evident enjoyment of the rising indignation which she read in his countenance; "not being queen of the night, I am not at all disposed to be answerable for the turn of the conversation."

Mowbray, in no humour to bear jesting, yet afraid to expose himself by farther inquiry in a company so public, darted a fierce look at Lady Penelope, then in close conversation with Lord Etherington,—advanced a step or two towards them,—then, as if checking himself, turned on his heel and left the

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room. A few minutes afterwards, and when certain satirical nods and winks were circulating among the assembly, a waiter slid a piece of paper into Mrs. Jones's hand, who, on looking at the contents, seemed about to leave the room.

"Jones—Jones!" exclaimed Lady Penelope, in surprise and displeasure.

"Only the key of the tea-caddie, your ladyship," answered Jones; "I will be back in an instant."

"Jones—Jones!" again exclaimed her mistress, "here is enough"— of tea, she would have said; but Lord Etherington was so near her, that she was ashamed to complete the sentence, and had only hope in Jones's quickness of apprehension, and the prospect that she would be unable to find the key which she went in search of.

Jones, meanwhile, tripped off to a sort of housekeeper's apartment, of which she was *locum tenens* for the evening, for the more ready supply of whatever might be wanted on Lady Penelope's night, as it was called. Here she found Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's, whom she instantly began to assail with, "La! now, Mr. Mowbray, you are such another gentleman!—I am sure you will make me lose my place—I'll swear you will—what can you have to say, that you could not as well put off for an hour?"

"I want to know, Jones," answered Mowbray, in a different tone, perhaps, from what the damsel expected, "what your lady was just now saying about my family."

"Pshaw!—was that all?" answered Mrs. Jones. "What should she be saying?—nonsense—Who minds what she says? I am sure I never do, for one."

"Nay, but, my dear Jones," said Mowbray, "I insist upon knowing—I must know, and I *will* know."

"La! Mr. Mowbray, why should I make mischief?—As I live, I hear some one coming! and if you were found speaking with me here—indeed, indeed, some one is coming!"

"The devil may come, if he will!" said Mowbray, "but we do not part, pretty mistress, till you tell me what I wish to know."

"Lord, sir, you frighten me!" answered Jones; "but all the room heard it as well as I—it was about Miss Mowbray—and that my lady would be shy of her company hereafter—for that she was—she was"——

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"For that my sister was *what?*" said Mowbray, fiercely, seizing her arm.

"Lord, sir, you terrify me," said Jones, beginning to cry; "at any rate, it was not I that said it—it was Lady Penelope."

"And what was it the old, adder-tongued madwoman dared to say of Clara Mowbray?—Speak out plainly, and directly, or, by Heaven, I'll make you!"

"Hold, sir—hold, for God's sake!—you will break my arm," answered the terrified handmaiden. "I am sure I know no harm of Miss Mowbray; only, my lady spoke as if she was no better than she ought to be.—Lord, sir, there is some one listening at the door!"—and making a spring out of his grasp, she hastened back to the room in which the company were assembled.

Mowbray stood petrified at the news he had heard, ignorant alike what could be the motive for a calummy so atrocious, and uncertain what he were best do to put a stop to the scandal. To his farther confusion, he was presently convinced of the truth of Mrs. Jones's belief that they had been watched, for, as he went to the door of the apartment, he was met by Mr. Touchwood.

"What has brought you here, sir?" said Mowbray, sternly.

"Hoitie, toitie," answered the traveller, "why, how came *you* here, if you go to that, squire?—Egad, Lady Penelope is trembling for her souchong, so I just took a step here to save her ladyship the trouble of looking after Mrs. Jones in person, which, I think, might have been a worse interruption than mine, Mr. Mowbray."

"Pshaw, sir, you talk nonsense," said Mowbray; "the tea-room is so infernally hot, that I had sat down here a moment to draw breath, when the young woman came in."

"And you are going to run away, now the old gentleman is come in," said Touchwood—"Come, sir, I am more your friend than you may think."

"Sir, you are intrusive—I want nothing that you can give me," said Mowbray.

"That is a mistake," answered the senior; "for I can supply you with what most young men want—money and wisdom."

"You will do well to keep both till they are wanted," said Mowbray.

"Why, so I would, squire, only that I have taken something

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of a fancy for your family; and they are supposed to have wanted cash and good counsel for two generations, if not for three."

"Sir," said Mowbray, angrily, "you are too old either to play the buffoon or to get buffoon's payment."

"Which is like monkey's allowance, I suppose," said the traveller, "more kicks than halfpence.—Well—at least I am not young enough to quarrel with boys for bullying. I'll convince you, however, Mr. Mowbray, that I know some more of your affairs than what you give me credit for."

"It may be," answered Mowbray; "but you will oblige me more by minding your own."

"Very like; meantime, your losses to-night to my Lord Etherington are no trifle, and no secret neither."

"Mr. Touchwood, I desire to know where you had your information?" said Mowbray.

"A matter of very little consequence compared to its truth or falsehood, Mr. Mowbray," answered the old gentleman.

"But of the last importance to me, sir," said Mowbray. "In a word, had you such information by or through means of Lord Etherington?—Answer me this single question, and then I shall know better what to think on the subject."

"Upon my honour," said Touchwood, "I neither had my information from Lord Etherington directly nor indirectly. I say thus much to give you satisfaction, and I now expect you will hear me with patience."

"Forgive me, sir," interrupted Mowbray, "one farther question. I understand something was said in disparagement of my sister just as I entered the tea-room?"

"Hem—hem—hem," said Touchwood, hesitating. "I am sorry your ears have served you so well—something there *was* said lightly, something that can be easily explained, I dare say;—And now, Mr. Mowbray, let me speak a few serious words with you."

"And now, Mr. Touchwood, we have no more to say to each other—good evening to you."

He brushed past the old man, who in vain endeavoured to stop him, and, hurrying to the stable, demanded his horse. It was ready saddled, and waited his orders; but even the short time that was necessary to bring it to the door of the stable was exasperating to Mowbray's impatience. Not less exasperating was the constant interceding voice of Touchwood, who, in

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tones alternately plaintive and snappish, kept on a string of expostulations.

"Mr. Mowbray, only five words with you—Mr. Mowbray, you will repent this—Is this a night to ride in, Mr. Mowbray?—My stars, sir, if you would but have five minutes' patience!"

Curses, not loud but deep, muttered in the throat of the impatient laird, were the only reply, until his horse was brought out, when, staying no farther question, he sprung into the saddle. The poor horse paid for the delay, which could not be laid to his charge. Mowbray struck him hard with his spurs as soon as he was in his seat—the noble animal reared, bolted, and sprung forward like a deer, over stock and stone, the nearest road—and we are aware it was a rough one—to Shaws Castle. There is a sort of instinct by which horses perceive the humour of their riders, and are furious and impetuous, or dull and sluggish, as if to correspond with it; and Mowbray's gallant steed seemed on this occasion to feel all the stings of his master's internal ferment, although not again urged with the spur. The ostler stood listening to the clash of the hoofs succeeding each other in thick and close gallop, until they died away in the distant woodland.

"If St. Ronan's reach home this night, with his neck unbroken," muttered the fellow, "the devil must have it in keeping."

"Mercy on us!" said the traveller, "he rides like a Bedouin Arab! but in the desert there are neither trees to cross the road, nor cleughs, nor lins, nor floods, nor fords. Well, I must set to work myself, or this gear will get worse than even I can mend.—Here you, ostler, let me have your best pair of horses instantly to Shaws Castle."

"To Shaws Castle, sir?" said the man, with some surprise.

"Yes—do you not know such a place?"

"In troth, sir, sae few company go there, except on the great ball day, that we have had time to forget the road to it—but St. Ronan's was here even now, sir."

"Ay, what of that?—he has ridden on to get supper ready—so, turn out, without loss of time."

"At your pleasure, sir," said the fellow, and called to the postilion accordingly.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-FIFTH.

DEBATE.

Sedet post equitem atra cura——

Still though the headlong cavalier,
O'er rough and smooth, in wild career,
Seems racing with the wind;
His sad companion,—ghastly pale,
And darksome as a widow's veil,
CARE—keeps her seat behind.

HORACE.

WELL was it that night for Mowbray, that he had always piqued himself on his horses, and that the animal on which he was then mounted was as sure-footed and sagacious as he was mettled and fiery. For those who observed next day the print of the hoofs on the broken and rugged track through which the creature had been driven at full speed by his furious master, might easily see, that in more than a dozen of places the horse and rider had been within a few inches of destruction. One bough of a gnarled and stunted oak-tree, which stretched across the road, seemed in particular to have opposed an almost fatal barrier to the horseman's career. In striking his head against this impediment, the force of the blow had been broken in some measure by a high-crowned hat, yet the violence of the shock was sufficient to shiver the branch to pieces. Fortunately it was already decayed; but, even in that state, it was subject of astonishment to every one that no fatal damage had been sustained in so formidable an encounter. Mowbray himself was unconscious of the accident.

Scarcely aware that he had been riding at an unusual rate, scarce sensible that he had ridden faster perhaps than ever he followed the hounds, Mowbray alighted at his stable door, and flung the bridle to his groom, who held up his hands in astonishment when he beheld the condition of the favourite horse; but, concluding that his master must be intoxicated, he prudently forbore to make any observations.

No sooner did the unfortunate traveller suspend that rapid motion, by which he seemed to wish to annihilate, as far as possible, time and space, in order to reach the place he had now

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attained, than it seemed to him as if he would have given the world that seas and deserts had lain between him and the house of his fathers, as well as that only sister with whom he was now about to have a decisive interview.

"But the place and the hour are arrived," he said, biting his lip with anguish; "this explanation must be decisive; and whatever evils may attend it, suspense must be ended now, at once and for ever."

He entered the Castle, and took the light from the old domestic, who, hearing the clatter of his horse's feet, had opened the door to receive him.

"Is my sister in her parlour?" he asked, but in so hollow a voice, that the old man only answered his question by another, "Was his honour well?"

"Quite well, Patrick—never better in my life," said Mowbray; and turning his back on the old man, as if to prevent his observing whether his countenance and his words corresponded, he pursued his way to his sister's apartment. The sound of his step upon the passage roused Clara from a reverie, perhaps a sad one; and she had trimmed her lamp, and stirred her fire, so slow did he walk, before he at length entered her apartment.

"You are a good boy, brother," she said, "to come thus early home; and I have some good news for your reward. The groom has fetched back Trimmer—He was lying by the dead hare, and he had chased him as far as Drumlyford—the shepherd had carried him to the shieling, till some one should claim him."

"I would he had hanged him, with all my heart!" said Mowbray.

"How?—hang Trimmer?—your favourite Trimmer, that has beat the whole country?—and it was only this morning you were half crying because he was amissing, and like to murder man and mother's son?"

"The better I like any living thing," answered Mowbray, "the more reason I have for wishing it dead and at rest; for neither I, nor anything that I love, will ever be happy more."

"You cannot frighten me, John, with these flights," answered Clara, trembling, although she endeavoured to look unconcerned —"You have used me to them too often."

"It is well for you, then; you will be ruined without the shock of surprise."

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"So much the better—We have been," said Clara,

"'So constantly in poortith's sight,
The thoughts on't gie us little fright.'

So say I with honest Robert Burns."

"D—n Burns and his trash!" said Mowbray, with the impatience of a man determined to be angry with everything but himself, who was the real source of the evil.

"And why damn poor Burns?" said Clara composedly; "it is not his fault if you have not risen a winner, for that, I suppose, is the cause of all this uproar."

"Would it not make any one lose patience," said Mowbray, "to hear her quoting the rhapsodies of a hobnailed peasant, when a man is speaking of the downfall of an ancient house? Your ploughman, I suppose, becoming one degree poorer than he was born to be, would only go without his dinner, or without his usual potation of ale. His comrades would cry 'poor fellow!' and let him eat out of their kit, and drink out of their bicker without scruple, till his own was full again. But the poor gentleman—the downfallen man of rank—the degraded man of birth—the disabled and disarmed man of power!—it is he that is to be pitied, who loses not merely drink and dinner, but honour, situation, credit, character, and name itself!"

"You are declaiming in this manner in order to terrify me," said Clara; "but, friend John, I know you and your ways, and I have made up my mind upon all contingencies that can take place. I will tell you more—I have stood on this tottering pinnacle of rank and fashion, if our situation can be termed such, till my head is dizzy with the instability of my eminence; and I feel the strange desire of tossing myself down, which the devil is said to put into folk's heads when they stand on the top of steeples—at least, I had rather the plunge were over."

"Be satisfied, then; if that will satisfy you—the plunge *is* over, and we are—what they used to call it in Scotland—gentle beggars, creatures to whom our second, and third, and fourth, and fifth cousins may, if they please, give a place at the side-table, and a seat in the carriage with the lady's-maid, if driving backwards will not make us sick."

"They may give it to those who will take it," said Clara; "but I am determined to eat bread of my own buying—I can do twenty things, and I am sure some one or other of them will

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bring me all the little money I will need. I have been trying, John, for several months, how little I can live upon, and you would laugh if you heard how low I have brought the account."

"There is a difference, Clara, between fanciful experiments and real poverty—the one is a masquerade, which we can end when we please, the other is wretchedness for life."

"Methinks, brother," replied Miss Mowbray, "it would be better for you to set me an example how to carry my good resolutions into effect, than to ridicule them."

"Why, what would you have me do?" said he, fiercely—"turn postilion, or rough-rider, or whipper-in?—I don't know anything else that my education, as I have used it, has fitted me for—and then some of my old acquaintance would, I dare say, give me a crown to drink now and then for old acquaintance' sake."

"This is not the way, John, that men of sense think or speak of serious misfortunes," answered his sister; "and I do not believe that this is so serious as it is your pleasure to make it."

"Believe the very worst you can think," replied he, "and you will not believe bad enough!—You have neither a guinea, nor a house, nor a friend;—pass but a day, and it is a chance that you will not have a brother."

"My dear John, you have drunk hard—rode hard."

"Yes—such tidings deserved to be carried express, especially to a young lady who receives them so well," answered Mowbray bitterly. "I suppose, now, it will make no impression, if I were to tell you that you have it in your power to stop all this ruin?"

"By consummating my own, I suppose—Brother, I said you could not make me tremble, but you have found a way to do it."

"What, you expect I am again to urge you with Lord Etherington's courtship?—That *might* have saved all, indeed—But that day of grace is over."

"I am glad of it, with all my spirit," said Clara; "may it take with it all that we can quarrel about!—But till this instant, I thought it was for this very point that this long voyage was bound, and that you were endeavouring to persuade me of the reality of the danger of the storm, in order to reconcile me to the harbour."

"You are mad, I think, in earnest," said Mowbray; "can

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you really be so absurd as to rejoice that you have no way left to relieve yourself and me from ruin, want, and shame?"

"From shame, brother?" said Clara. "No shame in honest poverty, I hope."

"That is according as folks have used their prosperity, Clara. —I must speak to the point.—There are strange reports going below—By Heaven! they are enough to disturb the ashes of the dead! Were I to mention them, I should expect our poor mother to enter the room—Clara Mowbray, can you guess what I mean?"

It was with the utmost exertion, yet in a faltering voice, that she was able, after an ineffectual effort, to utter the monosyllable, "*No!*"

"By Heaven! I am ashamed—I am even *afraid* to express my own meaning!—Clara, what is there which makes you so obstinately reject every proposal of marriage?—Is it that you feel yourself unworthy to be the wife of an honest man?—Speak out!—Evil Fame has been busy with your reputation—speak out!—Give me the right to cram their lies down the throats of the inventors, and when I go among them to-morrow, I shall know how to treat those who cast reflections on you! The fortunes of our house are ruined, but no tongue shall slander its honour.—Speak—speak, wretched girl! why are you silent?"

"Stay at home, brother," said Clara; "stay at home, if you regard our house's honour—murder cannot mend misery—Stay at home, and let them talk of me as they will—they can scarcely say worse of me than I deserve!"

The passions of Mowbray, at all times ungovernably strong, were at present inflamed by wine, by his rapid journey, and the previously disturbed state of his mind. He set his teeth, clenched his hands, looked on the ground, as one that forms some horrid resolution, and muttered almost unintelligibly, "It were charity to kill her."

"Oh! no—no—no!" exclaimed the terrified girl, throwing herself at his feet; "do not kill me, brother! I have wished for death—thought of death—prayed for death—but, oh! it is frightful to think that he is near—Oh! not a bloody death, brother, nor by your hand!"

She held him close by the knees as she spoke, and expressed in her looks and accents the utmost terror. It was not, indeed, without reason; for the extreme solitude of the place, the violent

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and inflamed passions of her brother, and the desperate circumstances to which he had reduced himself, seemed all to concur to render some horrid act of violence not an improbable termination of this strange interview.

Mowbray folded his arms, without unclenching his hands, or raising his head, while his sister continued on the floor, clasping him round the knees with all her strength, and begging piteously for her life and for mercy.

"Fool!" he said at last, "let me go!—Who cares for thy worthless life?—who cares if thou live or die? Live, if thou canst—and be the hate and scorn of every one else, as much as thou art mine!"

He grasped her by the shoulder, with one hand pushed her from him, and as she arose from the floor, and again pressed to throw her arms around his neck, he repulsed her with his arm and hand, with a push—or blow—it might be termed either one or the other—violent enough, in her weak state, to have again extended her on the ground, had not a chair received her as she fell. He looked at her with ferocity, grappled a moment in his pocket; then ran to the window, and throwing the sash violently up, thrust himself as far as he could without falling into the open air. Terrified, and yet her feelings of his unkindness predominating even above her fears, Clara continued to exclaim,

"Oh, brother, say you did not mean this!—Oh, say you did not mean to strike me!—Oh, whatever I have deserved, be not you the executioner!—It is not manly—it is not natural—there are but two of us in the world!"

He returned no answer; and, observing that he continued to stretch himself from the window, which was in the second storey of the building, and overlooked the court, a new cause of apprehension mingled, in some measure, with her personal fears. Timidly, and with streaming eyes and uplifted hands, she approached her angry brother, and fearfully yet firmly seized the skirt of his coat, as if anxious to preserve him from the effects of that despair, which so lately seemed turned against her, and now against himself.

He felt the pressure of her hold, and drawing himself angrily back, asked her sternly what she wanted.

"Nothing," she said, quitting her hold of his coat; "but what—what did he look after so anxiously?"

"After the devil!" he answered, fiercely; then drawing in

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his head, and taking her hand, "By my soul, Clara—it is true, if ever there was truth in such a tale!—He stood by me just now, and urged me to murder thee!—What else could have put my hunting-knife into my thought?—Ay, by God, and into my very hand—at such a moment?—Yonder I could almost fancy I see him fly, the wood, and the rock, and the water, gleaming back the dark-red furnace-light, that is shed on them by his dragon wings! By my soul, I can hardly suppose it fancy!—I can hardly think but that I was under the influence of an evil spirit—under an act of fiendish possession! But gone as he is, gone let him be—and thou, too ready implement of evil, be thou gone after him!" He drew from his pocket his right hand, which had all this time held his hunting-knife, and threw the implement into the courtyard as he spoke; then, with a mournful quietness and solemnity of manner, shut the window, and led his sister by the hand to her usual seat, which her tottering steps scarce enabled her to reach. "Clara," he said, after a pause of mournful silence, "we must think what is to be done, without passion or violence—there may be something for us in the dice yet, if we do not throw away our game. A blot is never a blot till it is hit—dishonour concealed is not dishonour in some respects.—Dost thou attend to me, wretched girl?" he said, suddenly and sternly raising his voice.

"Yes, brother—yes indeed, brother," she hastily replied, terrified even by delay again to awaken his ferocious and ungovernable temper.

"Thus it must be then," he said. "You must marry this Etherington—there is no help for it, Clara—You cannot complain of what your own vice and folly have rendered inevitable."

"But, brother"—said the trembling girl.

"Be silent. I know all that you would say. You love him not, you would say. I love him not, no more than you. Nay, what is more, he loves you not—if he did, I might scruple to give you to him, you being such as you have owned yourself. But you shall wed him out of hate, Clara—or for the interest of your family—or for what reason you will—But wed him you shall and must."

"Brother—dearest brother—one single word!"

"Not of refusal or expostulation—that time is gone by," said her brother. "When I believed thee what I thought thee this

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Mowbray's interview with his sister.—PAGE 392.

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morning, I might advise you, but I could not compel. But since the honour of our family has been disgraced by your means, it is but just, that, if possible, its disgrace should be hidden; and it shall,—ay, if selling you for a slave would tend to conceal it!"

"You do worse—you do worse by me!—A slave in an open market may be bought by a kind master—you do not give me that chance—you wed me to one who"——

"Fear him not, nor the worst that he can do, Clara," said her brother. "I know on what terms he marries; and, being once more your brother, as your obedience in this matter will make me, he had better tear his flesh from his bones with his own teeth, than do thee any displeasure! By Heaven, I hate him so much—for he has outreached me every way—that methinks it is some consolation that he will not receive in thee the excellent creature I thought thee!—Fallen as thou art, thou art still too good for him."

Encouraged by the more gentle and almost affectionate tone in which her brother spoke, Clara could not help saying, although almost in a whisper, "I trust it will not be so—I trust he will consider his own condition, honour, and happiness, better than to share it with me."

"Let him utter such a scruple if he dares," said Mowbray—"But he dares not hesitate—he knows that the instant he recedes from addressing you, he signs his own death-warrant or mine, or perhaps that of both; and his views, too, are of a kind that will not be relinquished on a point of scrupulous delicacy merely. Therefore, Clara, nourish no such thought in your heart as that there is the least possibility of your escaping such a marriage!—The match is booked—Swear you will not hesitate."

"I will not," she said, almost breathlessly, terrified lest he was about to start once more into the fit of unbridled fury which had before seized on him.

"Do not even whisper or hint an objection, but submit to your fate, for it is inevitable."

"I will—submit"—answered Clara, in the same trembling accent.

"And I," he said, "will spare you—at least at present—and it may be for ever—all inquiry into the guilt which you have confessed. Rumours there were of misconduct, which reached

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my ears even in England; but who could have believed them that looked on you daily, and witnessed your late course of life? —On this subject I will be at present silent—perhaps may not again touch on it—that is, if you do nothing to thwart my pleasure, or to avoid the fate which circumstances render unavoidable.—And now it is late—retire, Clara, to your bed—think on what I have said as what necessity has determined, and not my selfish pleasure."

He held out his hand, and she placed, but not without reluctant terror, her trembling palm in his. In this manner, and with a sort of mournful solemnity, as if they had been in attendance upon a funeral, he handed his sister through a gallery hung with old family pictures, at the end of which was Clara's bed-chamber. The moon, which at this moment looked out through a huge volume of mustering clouds that had long been boding storm, fell on the two last descendants of that ancient family, as they glided hand in hand, more like the ghosts of the deceased than like living persons, through the hall and amongst the portraits of their forefathers. The same thoughts were in the breasts of both, but neither attempted to say, while they cast a flitting glance on the pallid and decayed representations, "How little did these anticipate this catastrophe of their house!" At the door of the bedroom Mowbray quitted his sister's hand, and said, "Clara, you should to-night thank God, that saved you from a great danger, and me from a deadly sin."

"I will," she answered—"I will." And, as if her terror had been anew excited by this allusion to what had passed, she bid her brother hastily good-night, and was no sooner within her apartment, than he heard her turn the key in the lock, and draw two bolts besides.

"I understand you, Clara," muttered Mowbray between his teeth, as he heard one bar drawn after another. "But if you could earth yourself under Ben Nevis, you could not escape what fate has destined for you.—Yes!" he said to himself, as he walked with slow and moody pace through the moonlit gallery, uncertain whether to return to the parlour, or to retire to his solitary chamber, when his attention was roused by a noise in the courtyard.

The night was not indeed far advanced, but it had been so long since Shaws Castle received a guest, that, had Mowbray not heard the rolling of wheels in the courtyard, he might have

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thought rather of housebreakers than of visitors. But, as the sound of a carriage and horses was distinctly heard, it instantly occurred to him, that the guest must be Lord Etherington, come, even at this late hour, to speak with him on the reports which were current to his sister's prejudice, and perhaps to declare his addresses to her were at an end. Eager to know the worst, and to bring matters to a decision, he re-entered the apartment he had just left, where the lights were still burning, and, calling loudly to Patrick, whom he heard in communing with the postilion, commanded him to show the visitor to Miss Mowbray's parlour. It was not the light step of the young nobleman which came tramping, or rather stamping, through the long passage, and up the two or three steps at the end of it. Neither was it Lord Etherington's graceful figure which was seen when the door opened, but the stout square substance of Mr. Peregrine Touchwood.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIXTH.

A RELATIVE.

Claim'd kindred there, and had his claim allow'd.
DESERTED VILLAGE.

STARTING at the unexpected and undesired apparition which presented itself in the manner described at the end of the last chapter, Mowbray yet felt, at the same time, a kind of relief that his meeting with Lord Etherington, painfully decisive as that meeting must be, was for a time suspended. So it was with a mixture of peevishness and internal satisfaction that he demanded what had procured him the honour of a visit from Mr. Touchwood at this late hour.

"Necessity that makes the old wife trot," replied Touchwood; "no choice of mine, I assure you—Gad, Mr. Mowbray, I would rather have crossed Saint Gothard than run the risk I have done to-night, rumbling through your breakneck roads in that d—d old wheelbarrow. On my word, I believe I must be troublesome to your butler for a draught of something—I am as thirsty as a coal-heaver that is working by the piece. You have porter, I suppose, or good old Scotch twopenny?"

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With a secret execration on his visitor's effrontery, Mr. Mowbray ordered the servant to put down wine and water, of which Touchwood mixed a gobletful, and drank it off."

"We are a small family," said his entertainer; "and I am seldom at home—still more seldom receive guests when I chance to be here—I am sorry I have no malt liquor, if you prefer it."

"Prefer it?" said Touchwood, compounding, however, another glass of sherry and water, and adding a large piece of sugar, to correct the hoarseness which, he observed, his night journey might bring on,—to be sure I prefer it, and so does everybody, except Frenchmen and dandies. No offence, Mr. Mowbray, but you should order a hogshead from Meux—the brown-stout, wired down for exportation to the colonies, keeps for any length of time, and in every climate—I have drunk it where it must have cost a guinea a quart, if interest had been counted."

"When I *expect* the honour of a visit from you, Mr. Touchwood, I will endeavour to be better provided," answered Mowbray; "at present your arrival has been without notice, and I would be glad to know if it has any particular object."

"This is what I call coming to the point," said Mr. Touchwood, thrusting out his stout legs, accoutred as they were with the ancient defences, called boot-hose, so as to rest his heels upon the fender. "Upon my life, the fire turns the best flower in the garden at this season of the year—I'll take the freedom to throw on a log.—Is it not a strange thing, by the by, that one never sees a fagot in Scotland? You have much small wood, Mr. Mowbray, I wonder you do not get some fellow from the midland counties to teach your people how to make a fagot."

"Did you come all the way to Shaws Castle," asked Mowbray, rather testily, "to instruct me in the mystery of fagot-making?"

"Not exactly—not exactly," answered the undaunted Touchwood; "but there is a right and a wrong way in everything—a word by the way, on any useful subject, can never fall amiss. —As for my immediate and more pressing business, I can assure you that it is of a nature sufficiently urgent, since it brings me to a house in which I am much surprised to find myself."

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"The surprise is mutual, sir," said Mowbray, gravely, observing that his guest made a pause; "it is full time you should explain it."

"Well, then," replied Touchwood, "I must first ask you whether you have never heard of a certain old gentleman called Scrogie, who took it into what he called his head, poor man, to be ashamed of the name he bore, though owned by many honest and respectable men, and chose to join it to your surname of Mowbray, as having a more chivalrous Norman sounding, and, in a word, a gentleman-like twang with it?"

"I have heard of such a person, though only lately," said Mowbray. "Reginald Scrogie Mowbray was his name. I have reason to consider his alliance with my family as undoubted, though you seem to mention it with a sneer, sir. I believe Mr. S. Mowbray regulated his family settlements very much upon the idea that his heir was to intermarry with our house."

"True, true, Mr. Mowbray," answered Touchwood; "and certainly it is not your business to lay the axe to the root of the genealogical tree, that is like to bear golden apples for you—Ha!"

"Well, well, sir—proceed—proceed," answered Mowbray.

"You may also have heard that this old gentleman had a son, who would willingly have cut up the said family tree into fagots; who thought Scrogie sounded as well as Mowbray, and had no fancy for an imaginary gentility which was to be attained by the change of one's natural name, and the disowning, as it were, of one's actual relations?"

"I think I have heard from Lord Etherington," answered Mowbray, "to whose communications I owe most of my knowledge about these Scrogie people, that old Mr. Scrogie Mowbray was unfortunate in a son, who thwarted his father on every occasion,—would embrace no opportunity which fortunate chances held out, of raising and distinguishing the family,—had imbibed low tastes, wandering habits, and singular objects of pursuit,—on account of which his father disinherited him."

"It is very true, Mr. Mowbray," proceeded Touchwood, "that this person did happen to fall under his father's displeasure, because he scorned forms and flummery,—loved better to make money as an honest merchant, than to throw it away as an idle gentleman,—never called a coach when walking on

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foot would serve the turn,—and liked the Royal Exchange better that St. James's Park. In short, his father disinherited him, because he had the qualities for doubling the estate, rather than those for squandering it."

"All this may be quite correct, Mr. Touchwood," replied Mowbray; "but, pray, what has this Mr. Scrogie junior to do with you or me?"

"Do with you or me!" said Touchwood, as if surprised at the question; "he has a great deal to do with me at least, since I am the very man myself."

"The devil you are," said Mowbray, opening wide his eyes in turn; "Mr. A—a—your name is Touchwood—P. Touchwood—Paul, I suppose, or Peter—I read it so in the subscription book at the Well."

"Peregrine, sir, Peregrine—my mother would have me so christened, because Peregrine Pickle came out during her confinement; and my poor foolish father acquiesced, because he thought it genteel, and derived from the Willoughbies. I don't like it, and I always write P. short, and you might have remarked an S. also before the surname—I use at present P. S. Touchwood. I had an old acquaintance in the city who loved his jest—he always called me Postscript Touchwood."

"Then, sir," said Mowbray, "if you are really Mr. Scrogie, *tout court*, I must suppose the name of Touchwood is assumed?"

"What the devil!" replied Mr. P. S. Touchwood, "do you suppose there is no name in the English nation will couple up legitimately with my paternal name of Scrogie, except your own, Mr. Mowbray?—I assure you I got the name of Touchwood, and a pretty spell of money along with it, from an old godfather, who admired my spirit in sticking by commerce."

"Well, sir, every one has his taste—many would have thought it better to enjoy a hereditary estate, by keeping your father's name of Mowbray, than to have gained another by assuming a stranger's name of Touchwood."

"Who told you Mr. Touchwood was a stranger to me?" said the traveller; "for aught I know, he had a better title to the duties of a son from me, than the poor old man who made such a fool of himself, by trying to turn gentleman in his old age. He was my grandfather's partner in the great firm of Touchwood, Scrogie, and Co.—Let me tell you, there is as good inheritance in house as in field—a man's partners are his

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fathers and brothers, and a head clerk may be likened to a kind of first cousin."

"I meant no offence whatever, Mr. Touchwood Scrogie."

"Scrogie Touchwood, if you please," said the senior; "the scrog branch first, for it must become rotten ere it become touchwood—ha, ha, ha!—you take me."

"A singular old fellow this," said Mowbray to himself, "and speaks in all the dignity of dollars; but I will be civil to him, till I can see what he is driving at.—You are facetious, Mr. Touchwood," he proceeded aloud. "I was only going to say, that although you set no value upon your connection with my family, yet I cannot forget that such a circumstance exists; and therefore I bid you heartily welcome to Shaws Castle."

"Thank ye, thank ye, Mr. Mowbray—I knew you would see the thing right. To tell you the truth, I should not have cared much to come a-begging for your acquaintance and cousinship, and so forth; but that I thought you would be more tractable in your adversity, than was your father in his prosperity."

"Did you know my father, sir?" said Mowbray.

"Ay, ay—I came once down here, and was introduced to him—saw your sister and you when you were children—had thoughts of making my will then, and should have clapped you both in before I set out to double Cape Horn! But, gad, I wish my poor father had seen the reception I got! I did not let the old gentleman, Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's that was then, smoke my money-bags—that might have made him more tractable—not but that we went on indifferent well for a day or two, till I got a hint that my room was wanted, for that the Duke of Devil-knows-what was expected, and my bed was to serve his valet-de-chambre.—'Oh, damn all gentle cousins!' said I, and off I set on the pad round the world again, and thought no more of the Mowbrays till a year or so ago."

"And pray, what recalled us to your recollection?"

"Why," said Touchwood, "I was settled for some time at Smyrna (for I turn the penny go where I will—I have done a little business even since I came here); but being at Smyrna, as I said, I became acquainted with Francis Tyrrel."

"The natural brother of Lord Etherington," said Mowbray.

"Ay, so called," answered Touchwood; "but by and by he is more likely to prove the Earl of Etherington himself, and t'other fine fellow the bastard."

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"The devil he is!—You surprise me, Mr. Touchwood."

"I thought I should—I thought I should—Faith, I am sometimes surprised myself at the turn things take in this world. But the thing is not the less certain—the proofs are lying in the strong chest of our house at London, deposited there by the old Earl, who repented of his roguery to Miss Martigny long before he died, but had not courage enough to do his legitimate son justice till the sexton had housed him."

"Good Heaven, sir!" said Mowbray; "and did you know all this while, that I was about to bestow the only sister of my house upon an impostor?"

"What was my business with that, Mr. Mowbray?" replied Touchwood; "you would have been very angry had any one suspected you of not being sharp enough to look out for yourself and your sister both. Besides, Lord Etherington, bad enough as he may be in other respects, was, till very lately, no impostor, or an innocent one, for he only occupied the situation in which his father had placed him. And, indeed, when I understood, upon coming to England, that he was gone down here, and, as I conjectured, to pay his addresses to your sister, to say truth, I did not see he could do better. Here was a poor fellow that was about to cease to be a lord and a wealthy man; was it not very reasonable that he should make the most of dignity while he had it? and if, by marrying a pretty girl while in possession of his title, he could get possession of the good estate of Nettlewood, why, I could see nothing in it but a very pretty way of breaking his fall."

"Very pretty for him, indeed, and very convenient too," said Mowbray; "but pray, sir, what was to become of the honour of my family?"

"Why, what was the honour of your family to me?" said Touchwood; "unless it was to recommend your family to my care that I was disinherited on account of it. And if this Etherington, or Bulmer, had been a good fellow, I would have seen all the Mowbrays that ever wore broad cloth, at Jericho, before I had interfered."

"I am really much indebted to your kindness," said Mowbray, angrily.

"More than you are aware of," answered Touchwood; "for, though I thought this Bulmer, even when declared illegitimate, might be a reasonable good match for your sister, considering

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the estate which was to accompany the union of their hands; yet, now I have discovered him to be a scoundrel—every way a scoundrel—I would not wish any decent girl to marry him, were they to get all Yorkshire, instead of Nettlewood. So I have come to put you right."

The strangeness of the news which Touchwood so bluntly communicated, made Mowbray's head turn round like that of a man who grows dizzy at finding himself on the verge of a precipice. Touchwood observed his consternation, which he willingly construed into an acknowledgment of his own brilliant genius.

"Take a glass of wine, Mr. Mowbray," he said, complacently; "take a glass of old sherry—nothing like it for clearing the ideas—and do not be afraid of me, though I come thus suddenly upon you, with such surprising tidings—you will find me a plain, simple, ordinary man, that have my faults and my blunders, like other people. I acknowledge that much travel and experience have made me sometimes play the busybody, because I find I can do things better than other people, and I love to see folk stare—it's a way I have got. But, after all, I am *un bon diable*, as the Frenchman says; and here I have come four or five hundred miles to lie quiet among you all, and put all your little matters to rights, just when you think they are most desperate."

"I thank you for your good intentions," said Mowbray; "but I must needs say that they would have been more effectual had you been less cunning in my behalf, and frankly told me what you knew of Lord Etherington; as it is, the matter has gone fearfully far. I have promised him my sister—I have laid myself under personal obligations to him—and there are other reasons why I fear I must keep my word to this man, earl or no earl."

"What!" exclaimed Touchwood, "would you give up your sister to a worthless rascal, who is capable of robbing the post-office, and of murdering his brother, because you have lost a trifle of money to him? Are you to let him go off triumphantly because he is a gamester as well as a cheat?—You are a pretty fellow, Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's—you are one of the happy sheep that go out for wool, and come home shorn. Egad, you think yourself a millstone, and turn out a sack of grain—You flew abroad a hawk, and have come home a pigeon

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—You snarled at the Philistines, and they have drawn your eye-teeth with a vengeance!"

"This is all very witty, Mr. Touchwood," replied Mowbray; "but wit will not pay this man Etherington, or whatever he is, so many hundreds as I have lost to him."

"Why, then, wealth must do what wit cannot," said old Touchwood; "I must advance for you, that is all. Look ye, sir, I do not go afoot for nothing—if I have laboured, I have reaped—and, like the fellow in the old play, 'I have enough, and can maintain my humour'—it is not a few hundreds or thousands either can stand betwixt old P. S. Touchwood and his purpose; and my present purpose is to make you, Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's, a free man of the forest. You still look grave on it, young man?—Why, I trust you are not such an ass as to think your dignity offended, because the plebeian Scrogie comes to the assistance of the terribly great and old house of Mowbray?"

"I am indeed not such a fool," answered Mowbray, with his eyes still bent on the ground, "to reject assistance that comes to me like a rope to a drowning man—but there is a circumstance"——he stopped short and drank a glass of wine—"a circumstance to which it is most painful to me to allude—but you seem my friend—and I cannot intimate to you more strongly my belief in your professions of regard than by saying, that the language held by Lady Penelope Penfeather on my sister's account, renders it highly proper that she were settled in life; and I cannot but fear, that the breaking off the affair with this man might be of great prejudice to her at this moment. They will have Nettlewood, and they may live separate—he has offered to make settlements to that effect, even on the very day of marriage. Her condition as a married woman will put her above scandal, and above necessity, from which, I am sorry to say, I cannot hope long to preserve her."

"For shame!—for shame!—for shame!" said Touchwood, accumulating his words thicker than usual on each other; "would you sell your own flesh and blood to a man like this Bulmer, whose character is now laid before you, merely because a disappointed old maid speaks scandal of her? A fine veneration you pay to the honoured name of Mowbray! If my poor, old, simple father had known what the owners of these two grand syllables could have stooped to do for merely ensuring

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subsistence, he would have thought as little of the noble Mowbrays as of the humble Scrogies. And, I dare say, the young lady is just such another—eager to get married—no matter to whom."

"Excuse me, Mr. Touchwood," answered Mowbray; "my sister entertains sentiments so very different from what you ascribe to her, that she and I parted on the most unpleasant terms, in consequence of my pressing this man's suit upon her. God knows, that I only did so, because I saw no other outlet from this most unpleasant dilemma. But, since you are willing to interfere, sir, and aid me to disentangle these complicated matters, which have, I own, been made worse by my own rashness, I am ready to throw the matter completely into your hands, just as if you were my father arisen from the dead. Nevertheless, I must needs express my surprise at the extent of your intelligence in these affairs."

"You speak very sensibly, young man," said the traveller; "and as for my intelligence, I have for some time known the finesses of this Master Bulmer as perfectly as if I had been at his elbow when he was playing all his dog's tricks with this family. You would hardly suspect now," he continued, in a confidential tone, "that what you were so desirous a while ago should take place, has in some sense actually happened, and that the marriage ceremony has really passed betwixt your sister and this pretended Lord Etherington?"

"Have a care, sir!" said Mowbray fiercely; "do not abuse my candour—this is no place, time, or subject for impertinent jesting."

"As I live by bread, I am serious," said Touchwood; "Mr. Cargill performed the ceremony; and there are two living witnesses who heard them say the words, 'I, Clara, take you, Francis,' or whatever the Scottish church puts in place of that mystical formula."

"It is impossible," said Mowbray; "Cargill dared not have done such a thing—a clandestine proceeding, such as you speak of, would have cost him his living. I'll bet my soul against a horse-shoe, it is all an imposition; and you come to disturb me, sir, amid my family distress, with legends that have no more truth in them than the Alkoran."

"There are some true things in the Alkoran (or rather the Koran, for the Al is merely the article prefixed), but let that

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pass—I will raise your wonder higher before I am done. It is very true, that your sister was indeed joined in marriage with this same Bulmer, that calls himself by the title of Etherington; but it is just as true, that the marriage is not worth a maravedi, for she believed him at the time to be another person—to be, in a word, Francis Tyrrel, who is actually what the other pretends to be, a nobleman of fortune."

"I cannot understand one word of all this," said Mowbray. "I must to my sister instantly, and demand of her if there be any real foundation for these wonderful averments."

"Do not go," said Touchwood, detaining him, "you shall have a full explanation from me; and to comfort you under your perplexity, I can assure you that Cargill's consent to celebrate the nuptials was only obtained by an aspersion thrown on your sister's character, which induced him to believe that speedy marriage would be the sole means of saving her reputation; and I am convinced in my own mind it is only the revival of this report which has furnished the foundation of Lady Penelope's chattering."

"If I could think so,"—said Mowbray, "if I could but think this is truth—and it seems to explain, in some degree, my sister's mysterious conduct—if I could but think it true, I should fall down and worship you as an angel from heaven!"

"A proper sort of angel," said Touchwood, looking modestly down on his short, sturdy supporters—"Did you ever hear of an angel in boot-hose? Or, do you suppose angels are sent to wait on broken-down horse-jockeys?"

"Call me what you will, Mr. Touchwood," said the young man; "only make out your story true, and my sister innocent!"

"Very well spoken, sir," answered the senior, "very well spoken! But then I understand you are to be guided by my prudence and experience? None of your G— damme doings, sir—your duels or your drubbings. Let *me* manage the affair for you, and I will bring you through with a flowing sail."

"Sir, I must feel as a gentleman," said Mowbray.

"Feel as a fool," said Touchwood, "for that is the true case. Nothing would please this Bulmer better than to fight through his rogueries—he knows very well, that he who can slit a pistol-ball on the edge of a penknife will always preserve some sort of reputation amidst his scoundrelism—but I shall take care to

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stop that hole. Sit down—be a man of sense, and listen to the whole of this strange story."

Mowbray sat down accordingly; and Touchwood, in his own way, and with many characteristic interjectional remarks, gave him an account of the early loves of Clara and Tyrrel—of the reasons which induced Bulmer at first to encourage their correspondence, in hopes that his brother would, by a clandestine marriage, altogether ruin himself with his father—of the change which took place in his views when he perceived the importance annexed by the old Earl to the union of Miss Mowbray with his apparent heir—of the desperate stratagem which he endeavoured to play off, by substituting himself in the room of his brother—and all the consequences, which it is unnecessary to resume here, as they are detailed at length by the perpetrator himself, in his correspondence with Captain Jekyl.

When the whole communication was ended, Mowbray, almost stupified by the wonders he had heard, remained for some time in a sort of reverie, from which he only started to ask what evidence could be produced of a story so strange.

"The evidence," answered Touchwood, "of one who was a deep agent in all these matters, from first to last—as complete a rogue, I believe, as the devil himself, with this difference, that our mortal fiend does not, I believe, do evil for the sake of evil, but for the sake of the profit which attends it. How far this plea will avail him in a court of conscience, I cannot tell; but his disposition was so far akin to humanity, that I have always found my old acquaintance as ready to do good as harm, providing he had the same *agio* upon the transaction."

"On my soul," said Mowbray, "you must mean Solmes! whom I have long suspected to be a deep villain—and now he proves traitor to boot. How the devil could you get into his intimacy, Mr. Touchwood?"

"The case was particular," said Touchwood. "Mr. Solmes, too active a member of the community to be satisfied with managing the affairs which his master entrusted to him, adventured in a little business on his own account; and thinking, I suppose, that the late Earl of Etherington had forgotten fully to acknowledge his services, as valet to his son, he supplied that defect by a small cheque on our house for £100, in name, and bearing the apparent signature, of the deceased. This

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small mistake being detected, Mr. Solmes, *porteur* of the little billet, would have been consigned to the custody of a Bow Street officer, but that I found means to relieve him, on condition of his making known to me the points of private history which I have just been communicating to you. What I had known of Tyrrel at Smyrna had given me much interest in him, and you may guess it was not lessened by the distresses which he had sustained through his brother's treachery. By this fellow's means, I have counterplotted all his master's fine schemes. For example, as soon as I learned Bulmer was coming down here, I contrived to give Tyrrel an anonymous hint, well knowing he would set off like the devil to thwart him, and so I should have the whole dramatis personæ together, and play them all off against each other, after my own pleasure."

"In that case," said Mr. Mowbray, "your expedient brought about the rencontre between the two brothers, when both might have fallen."

"Can't deny it—can't deny it," answered Scrogie, a little discountenanced—"a mere accident—no one can guard every point.—Egad, but I had like to have been baffled again, for Bulmer sent the lad Jekyl, who is not such a black sheep neither but what there are some white hairs about him, upon a treaty with Tyrrel, that my secret agent was not admitted to. Gad, but I discovered the whole—you will scarce guess how."

"Probably not easily, indeed, sir," answered Mowbray; "for your sources of intelligence are not the most obvious, any more than your mode of acting the most simple or most comprehensible."

"I would not have it so," said Touchwood; "simple men perish in their simplicity—I carry my eye-teeth about me.—And for my source of information—why, I played the eavesdropper, sir—listened—knew my landlady's cupboard with the double door—got into it as she has done many a time.—Such a fine gentleman as you would rather cut a man's throat, I suppose, than listen at a cupboard door, though the object were to prevent murder."

"I cannot say I should have thought of the expedient, certainly, sir," said Mowbray.

"I did though," said Scrogie, "and learned enough of what was going on, to give Jekyl a hint that sickened him of his commission, I believe—so the game is all in my own hands.

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Bulmer has no one to trust to but Solmes, and Solmes tells me everything."

Here Mowbray could not suppress a movement of impatience.

"I wish to God, sir, that since you were so kind as to interest yourself in affairs so intimately concerning my family, you had been pleased to act with a little more openness towards me. Here have I been for weeks the intimate of a damned scoundrel, whose throat I ought to have cut for his scandalous conduct to my sister. Here have I been rendering her and myself miserable, and getting myself cheated every night by a swindler, whom you, if it had been your pleasure, could have unmasked by a single word. I do all justice to your intentions, sir; but, upon my soul, I cannot help wishing you had conducted yourself with more frankness and less mystery; and I am truly afraid your love of dexterity has been too much for your ingenuity, and that you have suffered matters to run into such a skein of confusion, as you yourself will find difficulty in unravelling."

Touchwood smiled, and shook his head in all the conscious pride of superior understanding. "Young man," he said, "when you have seen a little of the world, and especially beyond the bounds of this narrow island, you will find much more art and dexterity necessary in conducting these businesses to an issue, than occurs to a blind John Bull, or a raw Scottishman. You will be then no stranger to the policy of life, which deals in mining and countermining,—now in making feints, now in thrusting with forthright passes. I look upon you, Mr. Mowbray, as a young man spoiled by staying at home, and keeping bad company; and will make it my business, if you submit yourself to my guidance, to inform your understanding, so as to retrieve your estate.—Don't—don't answer me, sir! because I know too well, by experience, how young men answer on these subjects—they are conceited, sir, as conceited as if they had been in all the four quarters of the world. I hate to be answered, sir, I hate it. And, to tell you the truth, it is because Tyrrel has a fancy of answering me, that I rather make you my confidant on this occasion, than him. I would have had him throw himself into my arms, and under my directions; but he hesitated—he hesitated, Mr. Mowbray—and I despise hesitation. If he thinks he has wit enough to manage his own matters, let him try it—let him try it. Not but I will

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do all that I can for him in fitting time and place; but I will let him dwell in his perplexities and uncertainties for a little while longer. And so, Mr. Mowbray, you see what sort of an odd fellow I am, and you can satisfy me at once whether you mean to come into my measures—only speak out at once, sir, for I abhor hesitation."

While Touchwood thus spoke, Mowbray was forming his resolution internally. He was not so inexperienced as the senior supposed; at least, he could plainly see that he had to do with an obstinate, capricious old man, who, with the best intentions in the world, chose to have everything in his own way; and, like most petty politicians, was disposed to throw intrigue and mystery over matters which had much better be prosecuted boldly and openly. But he perceived, at the same time, that Touchwood, as a sort of relation, wealthy, childless, and disposed to become his friend, was a person to be conciliated, the rather that the traveller himself had frankly owned that it was Francis Tyrrel's want of deference towards him, which had forfeited, or at least abated, his favour. Mowbray recollected, also, that the circumstances under which he himself stood did not permit him to trifle with returning gleams of good fortune. Subduing, therefore, the haughtiness of temper proper to him as an only son and heir, he answered respectfully, that, in his condition, the advice and assistance of Mr. Scrogie Touchwood were too important, not to be purchased at the price of submitting his own judgment to that of an experienced and sagacious friend.

"Well said, Mr. Mowbray," replied the senior, "well said. Let me once have the management of your affairs, and we will brush them up for you without loss of time.—I must be obliged to you for a bed for the night, however—it is as dark as a wolf's mouth; and if you will give orders to keep the poor devil of a postilion, and his horses too, why I will be the more obliged to you."

Mowbray applied himself to the bell. Patrick answered the call, and was much surprised, when the old gentleman, taking the word out of his entertainer's mouth, desired a bed to be got ready, with a little fire in the grate; "for I take it, friend," he went on, "you have not guests here very often.—And see that my sheets be not damp, and bid the housemaid take care not to make the bed upon an exact level, but let it slope from the

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pillow to the footposts, at a declivity of about eighteen inches. —And hark ye—get me a jug of barley-water, to place by my bedside, with the squeeze of a lemon—or stay, you will make it as sour as Beelzebub—bring the lemon on a saucer, and I will mix it myself."

Patrick listened like one of sense forlorn, his head turning like a mandarin, alternately from the speaker to his master, as if to ask the latter whether this was all reality. The instant that Touchwood stopped, Mowbray added his fiat.

"Let everything be done to make Mr. Touchwood comfortable, in the way he wishes."

"Aweel, sir," said Patrick, "I shall tell Mally, to be sure, and we maun do our best, and—but it's unco late"——

"And therefore," said Touchwood, "the sooner we get to bed the better, my old friend. I, for one, must be stirring early—I have business of life and death—It concerns you too, Mr. Mowbray—but no more of that till to-morrow.—And let the lad put up his horses, and get him a bed somewhere."

Patrick here thought he had gotten upon firm ground for resistance, for which, displeased with the dictatorial manner of the stranger, he felt considerably inclined.

"Ye may catch us at that, if ye can," said Patrick; "there's nae post-cattle come into our stables—What do we ken, but that they may be glandered as the groom says?"

"We must take the risk to-night, Patrick," said Mowbray, reluctantly enough—"unless Mr. Touchwood will permit the horses to come back early next morning?"

"Not I, indeed," said Touchwood; "safe bind safe find—it may be once away and aye away, and we shall have enough to do to-morrow morning. Moreover, the poor carrion are tired, and the merciful man is merciful to his beast—and, in a word, if the horses go back to St. Ronan's Well to-night, I go there for company."

It often happens, owing, I suppose, to the perversity of human nature, that subserviency in trifles is more difficult to a proud mind, than compliance in matters of more importance. Mowbray, like other young gentlemen of his class, was finically rigid in his stable discipline, and even Lord Etherington's horses had not been admitted into that *sanctum sanctorum*, into which he now saw himself obliged to induct two wretched post-hacks. But he submitted with the best grace he could; and

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Patrick, while he left their presence with lifted-up hands and eyes, to execute the orders he had received, could scarcely help thinking that the old man must be the devil in disguise, since he could thus suddenly control his fiery master, even in the points which he had hitherto seemed to consider as of most vital importance.

"The Lord in his mercy haud a grip of this puir family! for I, that was born in it, am like to see the end of it." Thus ejaculated Patrick.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVENTH.

THE WANDERER.

'Tis a naughty night to swim in.

KING LEAR.

THERE was a wild uncertainty about Mowbray's ideas, after he started from a feverish sleep on the morning succeeding this memorable interview, that his sister, whom he really loved as much as he was capable of loving anything, had dishonoured him and her name; and the horrid recollection of their last interview was the first idea which his waking imagination was thrilled with. Then came Touchwood's tale of exculpation—and he persuaded himself, or strove to do so, that Clara must have understood the charge he had brought against her as referring to her attachment to Tyrrel, and its fatal consequences. Again, still he doubted how that could be—still feared that there must be more behind than her reluctance to confess the fraud which had been practised on her by Bulmer; and then, again, he strengthened himself in the first and more pleasing opinion by recollecting that, averse as she was to espouse the person he proposed to her, it must have appeared to her the completion of ruin, if he, Mowbray, should obtain knowledge of the clandestine marriage.

"Yes—O yes," he said to himself, "she would think that this story would render me more eager in the rascal's interest, as the best way of hushing up such a discreditable affair—faith, and she would have judged right too; for, had he actually

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been Lord Etherington, I do not see what else she could have done. But, not being Lord Etherington, and an anointed scoundrel into the bargain, I will content myself with cudgelling him to death so soon as I can get out of the guardianship of this old, meddling, obstinate, self-willed busy-body.—Then, what is to be done for Clara?—This mock marriage was a mere bubble, and both parties must draw stakes. She likes this grave Don, who proves to be the stick of the right tree, after all—so do not I, though there be something lord-like about him. I was sure a strolling painter could not have carried it off so. She may marry him, I suppose, if the law is not against it—then she has the earldom, and the Oaklands, and Nettlewood, all at once.—Gad, we should come in winners, after all—and, I dare say, this old boy Touchwood is as rich as a Jew—worth a hundred thousand at least—He is too peremptory to be cut up for sixpence under a hundred thousand. —And he talks of putting me to rights—I must not wince—must stand still to be curried a little—Only, I wish the law may permit Clara's being married to this other earl.—A woman cannot marry two brothers, that is certain; but, then, if she is not married to the one of them in good and lawful form, there can be no bar to her marrying the other, I should think—I hope the lawyers will talk no nonsense about it—I hope Clara will have no foolish scruples.—But, by my word, the first thing I have to hope is, that the thing is true, for it comes through but a suspicious channel. I'll away to Clara instantly—get the truth out of her—and consider what is to be done."

Thus partly thought and partly spoke the young Laird of St. Ronan's, hastily dressing himself, in order to inquire into the strange chaos of events which perplexed his imagination.

When he came down to the parlour where they had supped last night, and where breakfast was prepared this morning, he sent for a girl who acted as his sister's immediate attendant, and asked "if Miss Mowbray was yet stirring?"

The girl answered, "she had not rung her bell."

"It is past her usual hour," said Mowbray, "but she was disturbed last night. Go, Martha, tell her to get up instantly—say I have excellent good news for her—or, if her head aches, I will come and tell them to her before she rises—go like lightning."

Martha went, and returned in a minute or two. "I cannot make my mistress hear, sir, knock as loud as I will. I wish,"

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she added, with that love of evil presage which is common in the lower ranks, "that Miss Clara may be well, for I never knew her sleep so sound."

Mowbray jumped from the chair into which he had thrown himself, ran through the gallery, and knocked smartly at his sister's door; there was no answer. "Clara, dear Clara!—Answer me but one word—say but you are well. I frightened you last night—I had been drinking wine—I was violent—forgive me!—Come, do not be sulky—speak but a single word—say but you are well."

He made the pauses longer betwixt every branch of his address, knocked sharper and louder, listened more anxiously for an answer; at length he attempted to open the door, but found it locked, or otherwise secured. "Does Miss Mowbray always lock her door?" he asked the girl.

"Never knew her do it before, sir; she leaves it open that I may call her, and open the window shutters."

She had too good reason for precaution last night, thought her brother, and then remembered having heard her bar the door.

"Come, Clara," he continued, greatly agitated, "do not be silly; if you will not open the door, I must force it, that's all; for how can I tell but that you are sick, and unable to answer?—if you are only sullen, say so.—She returns no answer," he said, turning to the domestic, who was now joined by Touchwood.

Mowbray's anxiety was so great, that it prevented his taking any notice of his guest, and he proceeded to say, without regarding his presence, "What is to be done?—she may be sick—she may be asleep—she may have swooned; if I force the door, it may terrify her to death in the present weak state of her nerves.—Clara, dear Clara! do but speak a single word, and you shall remain in your own room as long as you please."

There was no answer. Miss Mowbray's maid, hitherto too much fluttered and alarmed to have much presence of mind, now recollected a back-stair which communicated with her mistress's room from the garden, and suggested she might have gone out that way.

"Gone out," said Mowbray, in great anxiety, and looking at the heavy fog, or rather small rain, which blotted the November morning,—"Gone out, and in weather like this!—But we may get into her room from the back-stair."

So saying, and leaving his guest to follow or remain as he

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thought proper, he flew rather than walked to the garden, and found the private door which led into it from the bottom of the back-stair above mentioned was wide open. Full of vague but fearful apprehensions, he rushed up to the door of his sister's apartment, which opened from her dressing-room to the landing-place of the stair; it was ajar, and that which communicated betwixt the bed-room and dressing-room was half open. "Clara, Clara!" exclaimed Mowbray, invoking her name rather in an agony of apprehension, than as any longer hoping for a reply. And his apprehension was but too prophetic.

Miss Mowbray was not in that apartment; and from the order in which it was found, it was plain she had neither undressed on the preceding night, nor occupied the bed. Mowbray struck his forehead in an agony of remorse and fear. "I have terrified her to death," he said; "she has fled into the woods and perished there!"

Under the influence of this apprehension, Mowbray, after another hasty glance around the apartment, as if to assure himself that Clara was not there, rushed again into the dressing-room, almost overturning the traveller, who, in civility, had not ventured to enter the inner apartment. "You are as mad as a *Hamako*,"* said the traveller; "let us consult together, and I am sure I can contrive"——

"Oh, d—n your contrivance!" said Mowbray, forgetting all proposed respect in his natural impatience, aggravated by his alarm; "if you had behaved straightforward, and like a man of common sense, this would not have happened!"

"God forgive you, young man, if your reflections are unjust," said the traveller, quitting the hold he had laid upon Mowbray's coat; "and God forgive me too, if I have done wrong while endeavouring to do for the best!—But may not Miss Mowbray have gone down to the Well? I will order my horses, and set off instantly."

"Do, do," said Mowbray recklessly; "I thank you;" and hastily traversing the garden, as if desirous to get rid at once of his visitor and his own thoughts, he took the shortest road to a little postern-gate, which led into the extensive copsewood, through some part of which Clara had caused a walk to be cut to a little summer-house built of rough shingles, covered with creeping shrubs.

* A fool is so termed in Turkey.

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As Mowbray hastened through the garden he met the old man by whom it was kept, a native of the south country, and an old dependant on the family. "Have you seen my sister?" said Mowbray, hurrying his words on each other with the eagerness of terror.

"What's your wull, St. Ronan's?" answered the old man, at once dull of hearing and slow of apprehension.

"Have you seen Miss Clara?" shouted Mowbray, and muttered an oath or two at the gardener's stupidity.

"In troth have I," replied the gardener deliberately; "what suld ail me to see Miss Clara, St. Ronan's?"

"When, and where?" eagerly demanded the querist.

"Ou, just yestreen, after tey-time—afore ye cam hame yoursell galloping sae fast," said Joseph.

"I am as stupid as he, to put off my time in speaking to such an old cabbage-stock," said Mowbray, and hastened on to the postern-gate already mentioned, leading from the garden to what was usually called Miss Clara's walk. Two or three domestics, whispering to each other, and with countenances that showed grief, fear, and suspicion, followed their master, desirous to be employed, yet afraid to force their services on the fiery young man.

At the little postern he found some traces of her he sought. The pass-key of Clara was left in the lock. It was then plain that she must have passed that way; but at what hour, or for what purpose, Mowbray dared not conjecture. The path, after running a quarter of a mile or more through an open grove of oaks and sycamores, attained the verge of the large brook, and became there steep and rocky, difficult to the infirm, and alarming to the nervous; often approaching the brink of a precipitous ledge of rock, which in this place overhung the stream, in some places brawling and foaming in hasty current, and in others seeming to slumber in deep and circular eddies. The temptations which this dangerous scene must have offered an excited and desperate spirit, came on Mowbray like the blight of the Simoom, and he stood a moment to gather breath and overcome these horrible anticipations, ere he was able to proceed. His attendants felt the same apprehension. "Puir thing—puir thing!—Oh, God send she may not have been left to hersell!—God send she may have been upholden!" were whispered by Patrick to the maidens, and by them to each other.

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At this moment the old gardener was heard behind them, shouting, "Master—St. Ronan's—Master—I have fund—I have fund"——

"Have you found my sister?" exclaimed the brother, with breathless anxiety.

The old man did not answer till he came up, and then, with his usual slowness of delivery, he replied to his master's repeated inquiries, "Na, I haena fund Miss Clara, but I hae fund something ye wad be wae to lose—your braw hunting-knife."

He put the implement into the hand of its owner, who, recollecting the circumstances under which he had flung it from him last night, and the now too probable consequences of that interview, bestowed on it a deep imprecation, and again hurled it from him into the brook. The domestics looked at each other, and recollecting each at the same time that the knife was a favourite tool of their master, who was rather curious in such articles, had little doubt that his mind was affected, in a temporary way at least, by his anxiety on his sister's account. He saw their confused and inquisitive looks, and assuming as much composure and presence of mind as he could command, directed Martha and her female companions to return and search the walks on the other side of Shaws Castle; and finally, ordered Patrick back to ring the bell, "which," he said, assuming a confidence that he was far from entertaining, "might call Miss Mowbray home from some of her long walks." He farther desired his groom and horses might meet him at the Clattering Brig, so called from a noisy cascade which was formed by the brook, above which was stretched a small foot-bridge of planks. Having thus shaken off his attendants, he proceeded himself, with all the speed he was capable of exerting, to follow out the path in which he was at present engaged, which, being a favourite walk with his sister, she might perhaps have adopted from mere habit, when in a state of mind which, he had too much reason to fear, must have put choice out of the question.

He soon reached the summer-house, which was merely a seat covered overhead and on the sides, open in front, and neatly paved with pebbles. This little bower was perched, like a hawk's nest, almost upon the edge of a projecting crag, the highest point of the line of rock which we have noticed; and had been selected by poor Clara on account of the prospect which it commanded down the valley. One of her gloves lay

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on the small rustic table in the summer-house. Mowbray caught it eagerly up. It was drenched with wet—the preceding day had been dry; so that, had she forgot it there in the morning, or in the course of the day, it could not have been in that state. She had certainly been there during the night, when it rained heavily.

Mowbray, thus assured that Clara had been in this place while her passions and fears were so much afloat as they must have been at her flight from her father's house, cast a hurried and terrified glance from the brow of the precipice into the deep stream that eddied below. It seemed to him that, in the sullen roar of the water, he heard the last groans of his sister—the foam-flakes caught his eye, as if they were a part of her garments. But a closer examination showed that there was no appearance of such a catastrophe. Descending the path on the other side of the bower, he observed a footprint in a place where the clay was moist and tenacious, which, from the small size and the shape of the shoe, it appeared to him must be a trace of her whom he sought. He hurried forward, therefore, with as much speed as yet permitted him to look out keenly for similar impressions, of which it seemed to him he remarked several, although less perfect than the former, being much obliterated by the quantity of rain that had since fallen—a circumstance seeming to prove that several hours had elapsed since the person had passed.

At length, through the various turnings and windings of a long and romantic path, Mowbray found himself, without having received any satisfactory intelligence, by the side of the brook, called St. Ronan's Burn, at the place where it was crossed by foot-passengers, by the Clattering Brig, and by horsemen through a ford a little lower. At this point the fugitive might have either continued her wanderings through her paternal woods, by a path which, after winding about a mile, returned to Shaws Castle, or she might have crossed the bridge, and entered a broken horseway, common to the public, leading to the Aultoun of St. Ronan's.

Mowbray, after a moment's consideration, concluded that the last was her most probable option. He mounted his horse, which the groom had brought down according to order, and commanding the man to return by the footpath, which he himself could not examine, he proceeded to ride towards the ford. The

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brook was swollen during the night, and the groom could not forbear intimating to his master that there was considerable danger in attempting to cross it. But Mowbray's mind and feelings were too high-strung to permit him to listen to cautious counsel. He spurred the snorting and reluctant horse into the torrent, though the water, rising high on the upper side, broke both over the pommel and the croupe of his saddle. It was by exertion of great strength and sagacity, that the good horse kept the ford-way. Had the stream forced him down among the rocks, which lie below the crossing-place, the consequences must have been fatal. Mowbray, however, reached the opposite side in safety, to the joy and admiration of the servant, who stood staring at him during the adventure. He then rode hastily towards the Aultoun, determined, if he could not hear tidings of his sister in that village, that he would spread the alarm, and institute a general search after her, since her elopement from Shaws Castle could, in that case, no longer be concealed. We must leave him, however, in his present state of uncertainty, in order to acquaint our readers with the reality of those evils, which his foreboding mind and disturbed conscience could only anticipate.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHTH.

THE CATASTROPHE.

> What sheeted ghost is wandering through the storm?
> For never did a maid of middle earth
> Choose such a time or spot to vent her sorrows.
>
> OLD PLAY.

GRIEF, shame, confusion, and terror, had contributed to overwhelm the unfortunate Clara Mowbray, at the moment when she parted with her brother, after the stormy and dangerous interview which it was our task to record in a former chapter. For years, her life, her whole tenor of thought, had been haunted by the terrible apprehension of a discovery, and now the thing which she feared had come upon her. The extreme violence of her brother, which went so far as to menace her personal safety, had united with the previous conflict of passions to produce a

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rapture of fear, which probably left her no other free agency, than that which she derived from the blind instinct which urges flight, as the readiest resource in danger.

We have no means of exactly tracing the course of this unhappy young woman. It is probable she fled from Shaws Castle on hearing the arrival of Mr. Touchwood's carriage, which she might mistake for that of Lord Etherington; and thus, while Mowbray was looking forward to the happier prospects which the traveller's narrative seemed to open, his sister was contending with rain and darkness, amidst the difficulties and dangers of the mountain path which we have described. These were so great, that a young woman more delicately brought up, must either have lain down exhausted, or have been compelled to turn her steps back to the residence she had abandoned. But the solitary wanderings of Clara had inured her to fatigue and to night-walks; and the deeper causes of terror which urged her to flight, rendered her insensible to the perils of her way. She had passed the bower, as was evident from her glove remaining there, and had crossed the foot-bridge; although it was almost wonderful, that, in so dark a night, she should have followed with such accuracy a track, where the missing a single turn by a cubit's length might have precipitated her into eternity.

It is probable that Clara's spirits and strength began in some degree to fail her after she had proceeded a little way on the road to the Aultoun; for she had stopped at the solitary cottage inhabited by the old female pauper, who had been for a time the hostess of the penitent and dying Hannah Irwin. Here, as the inmate of the cottage acknowledged, she had made some knocking, and she owned she had heard her moan bitterly, as she entreated for admission. The old hag was one of those whose hearts adversity turns to very stone, and obstinately kept her door shut, impelled more probably by general hatred to the human race, than by the superstitious fears which seized her: although she perversely argued that she was startled at the supernatural melody and sweetness of tone, with which the benighted wanderer made her supplication. She admitted, that when she heard the poor petitioner turn from the door, her heart was softened, and she did intend to open with the purpose of offering her at least a shelter; but that before she could "hirple to the door, and get the bar taken down," the unfortunate sup-

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plicant was not to be seen; which strengthened the old woman's opinion that the whole was a delusion of Satan.

It is conjectured that the repulsed wanderer made no other attempt to awaken pity or obtain shelter until she came to Mr. Cargill's Manse, in the upper room of which a light was still burning, owing to a cause which requires some explanation.

The reader is aware of the reasons which induced Bulmer, or the titular Lord Etherington, to withdraw from the country the sole witness, as he conceived, who could, or at least who might choose, to bear witness to the fraud which he had practised on the unfortunate Clara Mowbray. Of three persons present at the marriage, besides the parties, the clergyman was completely deceived. Solmes he conceived to be at his own exclusive devotion; and therefore, if by his means this Hannah Irwin could be removed from the scene, he argued plausibly, that all evidence to the treachery which he had practised would be effectually stifled. Hence his agent, Solmes, had received a commission, as the reader may remember, to effect her removal without loss of time, and had reported to his master that his efforts had been effectual.

But Solmes, since he had fallen under the influence of Touchwood, was constantly employed in counteracting the schemes which he seemed most active in forwarding, while the traveller enjoyed (to him an exquisite gratification) the amusement of countermining as fast as Bulmer could mine, and had in prospect the pleasing anticipation of blowing up the pioneer with his own petard. For this purpose, as soon as Touchwood learned that his house was to be applied to for the original deeds left in charge by the deceased Earl of Etherington, he expedited a letter, directing that only the copies should be sent, and thus rendered nugatory Bulmer's desperate design of possessing himself of that evidence. For the same reason, when Solmes announced to him his master's anxious wish to have Hannah Irwin conveyed out of the country, he appointed him to cause the sick woman to be carefully transported to the Manse, where Mr. Cargill was easily induced to give her temporary refuge.

To this good man, who might be termed an Israelite without guile, the distress of the unhappy woman would have proved a sufficient recommendation; nor was he likely to have inquired whether her malady might not be infectious, or to have made any of those other previous investigations which are sometimes

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clogs upon the bounty or hospitality of more prudent philanthropists. But, to interest him yet farther, Mr. Touchwood informed him by letter that the patient (not otherwise unknown to him) was possessed of certain most material information affecting a family of honour and consequence, and that he himself, with Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's in the quality of a magistrate, intended to be at the Manse that evening, to take her declaration upon this important subject. Such, indeed, was the traveller's purpose, which might have been carried into effect, but for his own self-important love of manœuvring on the one part, and the fiery impatience of Mowbray on the other, which, as the reader knows, sent the one at full gallop to Shaws Castle, and obliged the other to follow him post-haste. This necessity he intimated to the clergyman by a note, which he despatched express as he himself was in the act of stepping into the chaise.

He requested that the most particular attention should be paid to the invalid—promised to be at the Manse with Mr. Mowbray early on the morrow—and, with the lingering and inveterate self-conceit which always induced him to conduct everything with his own hand, directed his friend, Mr. Cargill, not to proceed to take the sick woman's declaration or confession until he arrived, unless in case of extremity.

It had been an easy matter for Solmes to transfer the invalid from the wretched cottage to the clergyman's Manse. The first appearance of the associate of much of her guilt had indeed terrified her; but he scrupled not to assure her, that his penitence was equal to her own, and that he was conveying her where their joint deposition would be formally received, in order that they might, so far as possible, atone for the evil of which they had been jointly guilty. He also promised her kind usage for herself, and support for her children; and she willingly accompanied him to the clergyman's residence, he himself resolving to abide in concealment the issue of the mystery, without again facing his master, whose star, as he well discerned, was about to shoot speedily from its exalted sphere.

The clergyman visited the unfortunate patient, as he had done frequently during her residence in his vicinity, and desired that she might be carefully attended. During the whole day, she seemed better; but, whether the means of supporting her exhausted frame had been too liberally administered, or whether the thoughts which gnawed her conscience had returned with

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double severity when she was released from the pressure of immediate want, it is certain that, about midnight, the fever began to gain ground, and the person placed in attendance on her came to inform the clergyman, then deeply engaged with the siege of Ptolemais, that she doubted if the woman would live till morning, and that she had something lay heavy at her heart, which she wished, as the emissary expressed it, "to make a clean breast of" before she died, or lost possession of her senses.

Awakened by such a crisis, Mr. Cargill at once became a man of this world, clear in his apprehension, and cool in his resolution, as he always was when the path of duty lay before him. Comprehending from the various hints of his friend Touchwood, that the matter was of the last consequence, his own humanity, as well as inexperience, dictated his sending for skilful assistance. His man-servant was accordingly despatched on horseback to the Well for Dr. Quackleben; while, upon the suggestion of one of his maids, "that Mrs. Dods was an uncommon skeely body about a sick-bed," the wench was dismissed to supplicate the assistance of the gudewife of the Cleikum, which she was not, indeed, wont to refuse whenever it could be useful. The male emissary proved, in Scottish phrase, a "corbie messenger;" for either he did not find the doctor, or he found him better engaged than to attend the sick-bed of a pauper, at a request which promised such slight remuneration as that of a parish minister. But the female ambassador was more successful; for, though she found our friend Luckie Dods preparing for bed at an hour unusually late, in consequence of some anxiety on account of Mr. Touchwood's unexpected absence, the good old dame only growled a little about the minister's fancies in taking puir bodies into his own house; and then, instantly donning cloak, hood, and pattens, marched down the gate with all the speed of the good Samaritan, one maid bearing the lamp before her, while the other remained to keep the house, and to attend to the wants of Mr. Tyrrel, who engaged willingly to sit up to receive Mr. Touchwood.

But ere Dame Dods had arrived at the Manse, the patient had summoned Mr. Cargill to her presence, and required him to write her confession while she had life and breath to make it.

"For I believe," she added, raising herself in the bed, and rolling her eyes wildly around, "that, were I to confess my

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guilt to one of a less sacred character, the Evil Spirit, whose servant I have been, would carry away his prey, both body and soul, before they had severed from each other, however short the space that they must remain in partnership!"

Mr. Cargill would have spoken some ghostly consolation, but she answered with pettish impatience, "Waste not words—waste not words!—Let me speak that which I must tell, and sign it with my hand: and do you, as the more immediate servant of God, and therefore bound to bear witness to the truth, take heed you write that which I tell you, and nothing else. I desired to have told this to St. Ronan's—I have even made some progress in telling it to others—but I am glad I broke short off—for I know you, Josiah Cargill, though you have long forgotten me."

"It may be so," said Cargill. "I indeed have no recollection of you."

"You once knew Hannah Irwin, though," said the sick woman; "who was companion and relation to Miss Clara Mowbray, and who was present with her on that sinful night, when she was wedded in the kirk of St. Ronan's."

"Do you mean to say that you are that person?" said Cargill, holding the candle so as to throw some light on the face of the sick woman. "I cannot believe it."

"No?" replied the penitent; "there is indeed a difference between wickedness in the act of carrying through its successful machinations, and wickedness surrounded by all the horrors of a death-bed!"

"Do not yet despair," said Cargill. "Grace is omnipotent—to doubt this is in itself a great crime."

"Be it so!—I cannot help it—my heart is hardened, Mr. Cargill; and there is something here," she pressed her bosom, "which tells me, that, with prolonged life and renewed health, even my present agonies would be forgotten, and I should become the same I have been before. I have rejected the offer of grace, Mr. Cargill, and not through ignorance, for I have sinned with my eyes open. Care not for me, then, who am a mere outcast." He again endeavoured to interrupt her, but she continued, "Or if you really wish my welfare, let me relieve my bosom of that which presses it, and it may be that I shall then be better able to listen to you. You say you remember me not—but if I tell you how often you refused to perform in secret

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the office which was required of you—how much you urged that it was against your canonical rules—if I name the argument to which you yielded—and remind you of your purpose, to acknowledge your transgression to your brethren in the church courts, to plead your excuse, and submit to their censure, which you said could not be a light one—you will be then aware, that, in the voice of the miserable pauper, you hear the words of the once artful, gay, and specious Hannah Irwin."

"I allow it—I allow it!" said Mr. Cargill; "I admit the tokens, and believe you to be indeed her whose name you assume."

"Then one painful step is over," said she; "for I would ere now have lightened my conscience by confession, saving for the cursed pride of spirit, which was ashamed of poverty, though it had not shrunk from guilt.—Well—In these arguments, which were urged to you by a youth best known to you by the name of Francis Tyrrel, though more properly entitled to that of Valentine Bulmer, we practised on you a base and gross deception.—Did you not hear some one sigh?—I hope there is no one in the room.—I trust I shall die when my confession is signed and sealed, without my name being dragged through the public—I hope ye bring not in your menials to gaze on my abject misery—I cannot brook that."

She paused and listened; for the ear, usually deafened by pain, is sometimes, on the contrary, rendered morbidly acute. Mr. Cargill assured her, there was no one present but himself. "But, O, most unhappy woman!" he said, "what does your introduction prepare me to expect?"

"Your expectation, be it ever so ominous, shall be fully satisfied.—I was the guilty confidant of the false Francis Tyrrel.—Clara loved the true one.—When the fatal ceremony passed, the bride and the clergyman were deceived alike—and I was the wretch—the fiend—who, aiding another yet blacker, if blacker could be—mainly helped to accomplish this cureless misery!"

"Wretch!" exclaimed the clergyman, "and had you not then done enough?—Why did you expose the betrothed of one brother to become the wife of another?"

"I acted," said the sick woman, "only as Bulmer instructed me; but I had to do with a master of the game. He contrived, by his agent Solmes, to match me with a husband imposed on me by his devices as a man of fortune—a wretch, who maltreated

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me—plundered me—sold me.—Oh! if fiends laugh, as I have heard they can, what a jubilee of scorn will there be, when Bulmer and I enter their place of torture!—Hark!—I am sure of it—some one draws breath as if shuddering!"

"You will distract yourself if you give way to these fancies. Be calm—speak on—but oh! at last, and for once, speak the truth!"

"I will, for it will best gratify my hatred against him, who, having first robbed me of my virtue, made me a sport and a plunder to the basest of the species. For that I wandered here to unmask him. I had heard he again stirred his suit to Clara, and I came here to tell young Mowbray the whole.—But do you wonder that I shrunk from doing so till this last decisive moment?—I thought of my conduct to Clara, and how could I face her brother?—And yet I hated her not after I learned her utter wretchedness—her deep misery, verging even upon madness—I hated her not then. I was sorry that she was not to fall to the lot of a better man than Bulmer;—and I pitied her after she was rescued by Tyrrel, and you may remember it was I who prevailed on you to conceal her marriage."

"I remember it," answered Cargill, "and that you alleged, as a reason for secrecy, danger from her family. I did conceal it, until reports that she was again to be married reached my ears."

"Well then," said the sick woman, "Clara Mowbray ought to forgive me—since what ill I have done her was inevitable, while the good I did was voluntary.—I must see her, Master Cargill—I must see her before I die—I shall never pray till I see her—I shall never profit by word of godliness till I see her! If I cannot obtain the pardon of a worm like myself, how can I hope for that of"——

She started at these words with a faint scream; for slowly, and with a feeble hand, the curtains of the bed opposite to the side at which Cargill sat were opened, and the figure of Clara Mowbray, her clothes and long hair drenched and dripping with rain, stood in the opening by the bedside. The dying woman sat upright, her eyes starting from their sockets, her lips quivering, her face pale, her emaciated hands grasping the bed-clothes, as if to support herself, and looking as much aghast as if her confession had called up the apparition of her betrayed friend.

"Hannah Irwin," said Clara, with her usual sweetness of

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tone, "my early friend—my unprovoked enemy !—Betake thee to Him who hath pardon for us all, and betake thee with confidence—for I pardon you as freely as if you had never wronged me—as freely as I desire my own pardon.—Farewell—Farewell !"

She retired from the room ere the clergyman could convince himself that it was more than a phantom which he beheld. He ran down stairs—he summoned assistants, but no one could attend his call; for the deep ruckling groans of the patient satisfied every one that she was breathing her last; and Mrs. Dods, with the maid-servant, ran into the bed-room, to witness the death of Hannah Irwin, which shortly after took place.

That event had scarcely occurred, when the maid-servant who had been left in the inn, came down in great terror to acquaint her mistress, that a lady had entered the house like a ghost, and was dying in Mr. Tyrrel's room. The truth of the story we must tell our own way.

In the irregular state of Miss Mowbray's mind, a less violent impulse than that which she had received from her brother's arbitrary violence, added to the fatigues, dangers, and terrors of her night-walk, might have exhausted the power of her body, and alienated those of her mind. We have before said that the lights in the clergyman's house had probably attracted her attention, and in the temporary confusion of a family, never remarkable for its regularity, she easily mounted the stairs, and entered the sick chamber undiscovered, and thus overheard Hannah Irwin's confession, a tale sufficient to have greatly aggravated her mental malady.

We have no means of knowing whether she actually sought Tyrrel, or whether it was, as in the former case, the circumstance of a light still burning where all around was dark, that attracted her; but her next apparition was close by the side of her unfortunate lover, then deeply engaged in writing, when something suddenly gleamed on a large old-fashioned mirror, which hung on the wall opposite. He looked up, and saw the figure of Clara, holding a light (which she had taken from the passage) in her extended hand. He stood for an instant with his eyes fixed on this fearful shadow, ere he dared to turn round on the substance which was thus reflected. When he did so, the fixed and pallid countenance almost impressed him with the belief that he saw a vision, and he shuddered when, stooping beside him, she took his

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hand. "Come away!" she said in a hurried voice—"Come away, my brother follows to kill us both. Come, Tyrrel, let us fly—we shall easily escape him.—Hannah Irwin is on before—but, if we are overtaken, I will have no more fighting—you must promise me that we shall not—we have had but too much of that—but you will be wise in future."

"Clara Mowbray!" exclaimed Tyrrel. "Alas! is it thus?—Stay—do not go," for she turned to make her escape—"stay—stay—sit down."

"I must go," she replied, "I must go—I am called—Hannah Irwin is gone before to tell all, and I must follow. Will you not let me go?—Nay, if you will hold me by force, I know I must sit down—But you will not be able to keep me for all that."

A convulsion fit followed, and seemed, by its violence, to explain that she was indeed bound for the last and darksome journey. The maid, who at length answered Tyrrel's earnest and repeated summons, fled terrified at the scene she witnessed, and carried to the Manse the alarm which we before mentioned.

The old landlady was compelled to exchange one scene of sorrow for another, wondering within herself what fatality could have marked this single night with so much misery. When she arrived at home, what was her astonishment to find there the daughter of the house, which, even in their alienation, she had never ceased to love, in a state little short of distraction, and tended by Tyrrel, whose state of mind seemed scarce more composed than that of the unhappy patient. The oddities of Mrs. Dods were merely the rust which had accumulated upon her character, but without impairing its native strength and energy; and her sympathies were not of a kind acute enough to disable her from thinking and acting as decisively as circumstances required.

"Maister Tyrrel," she said, "this is nae sight for men folk—ye maun rise and gang to another room."

"I will not stir from her," said Tyrrel—"I will not remove from her either now, or as long as she or I may live."

"That will be nae lang space, Maister Tyrrel, if ye wunna be ruled by common sense."

Tyrrel started up, as if half comprehending what she said, but remained motionless.

"Come, come," said the compassionate landlady; "do not

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stand looking on a sight sair eneugh to break a harder heart than yours, hinny—your ain sense tells ye, ye canna stay here —Miss Clara shall be weel cared for, and I'll bring word to your room-door frae half-hour to half-hour how she is."

The necessity of the case was undeniable, and Tyrrel suffered himself to be led to another apartment, leaving Miss Mowbray to the care of the hostess and her female assistants. He counted the hours in an agony, less by the watch than by the visits which Mrs. Dods, faithful to her promise, made from interval to interval, to tell him that Clara was not better—that she was worse—and, at last, that she did not think she could live over morning. It required all the deprecatory influence of the good landlady to restrain Tyrrel, who, calm and cold on common occasions, was proportionally fierce and impetuous when his passions were afloat, from bursting into the room, and ascertaining, with his own eyes, the state of the beloved patient. At length there was a long interval—an interval of hours—so long, indeed, that Tyrrel caught from it the flattering hope that Clara slept, and that sleep might bring refreshment both to mind and body. Mrs. Dods, he concluded, was prevented from moving, for fear of disturbing her patient's slumber; and, as if actuated by the same feeling which he imputed to her, he ceased to traverse his apartment, as his agitation had hitherto dictated, and throwing himself into a chair, forbore to move even a finger, and withheld his respiration as much as possible, just as if he had been seated by the pillow of the patient. Morning was far advanced when his landlady appeared in his room with a grave and anxious countenance.

"Mr. Tyrrel," she said, "ye are a Christian man."

"Hush, hush, for Heaven's sake!" he replied; "you will disturb Miss Mowbray."

"Naething will disturb her, puir thing," answered Mrs. Dods; "they have muckle to answer for that brought her to this."

"They have—they have indeed," said Tyrrel, striking his forehead; "and I will see her avenged on every one of them! —Can I see her?"

"Better not—better not," said the good woman; but he burst from her, and rushed into the apartment.

"Is life gone?—Is every spark extinct?" he exclaimed eagerly to a country surgeon, a sensible man, who had been

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summoned from Marchthorn in the course of the night. The medical man shook his head—Tyrrel rushed to the bedside, and was convinced by his own eyes that the being whose sorrows he had both caused and shared was now insensible to all earthly calamity. He raised almost a shriek of despair, as he threw himself on the pale hand of the corpse, wet it with tears, devoured it with kisses, and played for a short time the part of a distracted person. At length, on the repeated expostulation of all present, he suffered himself to be again conducted to another apartment, the surgeon following, anxious to give such sad consolation as the case admitted of.

"As you are so deeply concerned for the untimely fate of this young lady," he said, "it may be some satisfaction to you, though a melancholy one, to know, that it has been occasioned by a pressure on the brain, probably accompanied by a suffusion; and I feel authorised in stating, from the symptoms, that if life had been spared, reason would, in all probability, never have returned. In such a case, sir, the most affectionate relation must own that death, in comparison to life, is a mercy."

"Mercy!" answered Tyrrel; "but why, then, is it denied to me?—I know—I know!—My life is spared till I revenge her."

He started from his seat, and hurried eagerly down stairs. But, as he was about to rush from the door of the inn, he was stopped by Touchwood, who had just alighted from a carriage, with an air of stern anxiety imprinted on his features, very different from their usual expression. "Whither would ye? Whither would ye?" he said, laying hold of Tyrrel, and stopping him by force.

"For revenge—for revenge!" said Tyrrel. "Give way, I charge you on your peril!"

"Vengeance belongs to God," replied the old man, and his bolt has fallen.—This way—this way," he continued, dragging Tyrrel into the house. "Know," he said, so soon as he had led or forced him into a chamber, "that Mowbray of St. Ronan's has met Bulmer within this half-hour, and has killed him on the spot."

"Killed?—whom?" answered the bewildered Tyrrel.

"Valentine Bulmer, the titular Earl of Etherington."

"You bring tidings of death to the house of death," answered Tyrrel; "and there is nothing in this world left that I should live for."

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CHAPTER THIRTY-NINTH.

CONCLUSION.

Here come we to our close—for that which follows
Is but the tale of dull, unvaried misery.
Steep crags and headlong linns may court the pencil,
Like sudden haps, dark plots, and strange adventures;
But who would paint the dull and fog-wrapt moor,
In its long track of sterile desolation?

OLD PLAY.

WHEN Mowbray crossed the brook, as we have already detailed, his mind was in that wayward and uncertain state, which seeks something whereon to vent the self-engendered rage with which it labours, like a volcano before eruption. On a sudden, a shot or two, followed by loud voices and laughter, reminded him he had promised, at that hour, and in that sequestered place, to decide a bet respecting pistol-shooting, to which the titular Lord Etherington, Jekyl, and Captain MacTurk, to whom such a pastime was peculiarly congenial, were parties as well as himself. The prospect this recollection afforded him, of vengeance on the man whom he regarded as the author of his sister's wrongs, was, in the present state of his mind, too tempting to be relinquished; and, setting spurs to his horse, he rushed through the copse to the little glade, where he found the other parties, who, despairing of his arrival, had already begun their amusement. A jubilee shout was set up as he approached.

"Here comes Mowbray, dripping, py Cot, like a watering-pan," said Captain MacTurk.

"I fear him not," said Etherington (we may as well still call him so); "he has ridden too fast to have steady nerves."

"We shall soon see that, my Lord Etherington, or rather Mr. Valentine Bulmer," said Mowbray, springing from his horse, and throwing the bridle over the bough of a tree.

"What does this mean, Mr. Mowbray?" said Etherington, drawing himself up, while Jekyl and Captain MacTurk looked at each other in surprise.

"It means, sir, that you are a rascal and an impostor,"

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replied Mowbray, "who have assumed a name to which you have no right."

"That, Mr. Mowbray, is an insult I cannot carry farther than this spot," said Etherington.

"If you had been willing to do so, you should have carried with it something still harder to be borne," answered Mowbray.

"Enough, enough, my good sir; no use in spurring a willing horse. Jekyl, you will have the kindness to stand by me in this matter?"

"Certainly, my lord," said Jekyl.

"And as there seems to be no chance of taking up the matter amicably," said the pacific Captain MacTurk, "I will be most happy, so help me, to assist my worthy friend, Mr. Mowbray of St. Ronan's, with my countenance and advice. Very goot chance that we were here with the necessary weapons, since it would have been an unpleasant thing to have such an affair long upon the stomach, any more than to settle it without witnesses."

"I would fain know first," said Jekyl, "what all this sudden heat has arisen about?"

"About nothing," said Etherington, "except a mare's nest of Mr. Mowbray's discovering. He always knew his sister played the madwoman, and he has now heard a report, I suppose, that she has likewise in her time played the——fool."

"Oh, crimini!" cried Captain MacTurk, "my good Captain, let us pe loading and measuring out—for, by my soul, if these sweetmeats be passing between them, it is only the twa ends of a hankercher that can serve the turn—Cot tamn!"

With such friendly intentions the ground was hastily meted out. Each was well known as an excellent shot; and the Captain offered a bet to Jekyl of a mutchkin of Glenlivat that both would fall by the first fire. The event showed that he was nearly right, for the ball of Lord Etherington grazed Mowbray's temple at the very second of time that Mowbray's pierced his heart. He sprung a yard from the ground, and fell down a dead man. Mowbray stood fixed like a pillar of stone, his arm dropped to his side, his hand still clenched on the weapon of death, reeking at the touch-hole and muzzle. Jekyl ran to raise and support his friend, and Captain MacTurk, having adjusted his spectacles, stooped on one knee to look him in the face. "We should have had Dr. Quackleben here,"

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he said, wiping his glasses, and returning them to the shagreen case, "though it would have been only for form's sake—for he is as dead as a toor-nail, poor boy. But come, Mowbray, my bairn," he said, taking him by the arm, "we must be ganging our ain gate, you and me, before waur comes of it. I have a bit pownie here, and you have your horse till we get to Marchthorn. Captain Jekyl, I wish you a good morning. Will you have my umbrella back to the inn, for I surmeese it is going to rain?"

Mowbray had not ridden a hundred yards with his guide and companion, when he drew his bridle, and refused to proceed a step farther till he had learned what had become of Clara. The Captain began to find he had a very untractable pupil to manage, when, while they were arguing together, Touchwood drove past in his hack chaise. As soon as he recognised Mowbray, he stopped the carriage to inform him that his sister was at the Aultoun, which he had learned from finding there had been a messenger sent from thence to the Well for medical assistance, which could not be afforded, the Esculapius of the place, Dr. Quackleben, having been privately married to Mrs. Blower on that morning by Mr. Chatterly, and having set out on the usual nuptial tour.

In return for this intelligence, Captain MacTurk communicated the fate of Lord Etherington. The old man earnestly pressed instant flight, for which he supplied at the same time ample means, engaging to furnish every kind of assistance and support to the unfortunate young lady; and representing to Mowbray that if he stayed in the vicinity, a prison would soon separate them. Mowbray and his companion then departed southward upon the spur, reached London in safety, and from thence went together to the Peninsula, where the war was then at the hottest.

There remains little more to be told. Mr. Touchwood is still alive, forming plans which have no object, and accumulating a fortune, for which he has apparently no heir. The old man had endeavoured to fix this character, as well as his general patronage, upon Tyrrel, but the attempt only determined the latter to leave the country; nor has he been since heard of, although the title and estates of Etherington lie vacant for his acceptance. It is the opinion of many that he has entered into

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a Moravian mission, for the use of which he had previously drawn considerable sums.

Since Tyrrel's departure no one pretends to guess what old Touchwood will do with his money. He often talks of his disappointments, but can never be made to understand, or at least to admit, that they were in some measure precipitated by his own talent for intrigue and manœuvring. Most people think that Mowbray of St. Ronan's will be at last his heir. That gentleman has of late shown one quality which usually recommends men to the favour of rich relations—namely, a close and cautious care of what is already his own. Captain MacTurk's military ardour having revived when they came within smell of gunpowder, the old soldier contrived not only to get himself on full pay, but to induce his companion to serve for some time as a volunteer. He afterwards obtained a commission, and nothing could be more strikingly different than was the conduct of the young Laird of St. Ronan's and of Lieutenant Mowbray. The former, as we know, was gay, venturous, and prodigal; the latter lived on his pay, and even within it—denied himself comforts, and often decencies, when doing so could save a guinea, and turned pale with apprehension if, on any extraordinary occasion, he ventured sixpence a corner at whist. This meanness, or closeness of disposition, prevents his holding the high character to which his bravery and attention to his regimental duties might otherwise entitle him. The same close and accurate calculation of pounds, shillings, and pence marked his communications with his agent Meiklewham, who might otherwise have had better pickings out of the estate of St. Ronan's, which is now at nurse, and thriving full fast, especially since some debts, of rather an usurious character, have been paid up by Mr. Touchwood, who contented himself with more moderate usage.

On the subject of this property Mr. Mowbray, generally speaking, gave such minute directions for acquiring and saving, that his old acquaintance, Mr. Winterblossom, tapping his morocco snuff-box with the sly look which intimated the coming of a good thing, was wont to say that he had reversed the usual order of transformation, and was turned into a grub after having been a butterfly. After all, this narrowness, though a more ordinary modification of the spirit of avarice, may be

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founded on the same desire of acquisition which, in his earlier days, sent him to the gaming-table.

But there was one remarkable instance in which Mr. Mowbray departed from the rules of economy, by which he was guided in all others. Having acquired, for a large sum of money, the ground which he had formerly feued out for the erection of the hotel, lodging-houses, shops, etc., at St. Ronan's Well, he sent positive orders for the demolition of the whole; nor would he permit the existence of any house of entertainment on his estate, except that in the Aultoun, where Mrs. Dods reigns with undisputed sway, her temper by no means improved either by time, or her arbitrary disposition by the total absence of competition.

Why Mr. Mowbray, with his acquired habits of frugality, thus destroyed a property which might have produced a considerable income, no one could pretend to affirm. Some said that he remembered his own early follies, and others that he connected the buildings with the misfortunes of his sister. The vulgar reported that Lord Etherington's ghost had been seen in the ball-room, and the learned talked of the association of ideas. But it all ended in this, that Mr. Mowbray was independent enough to please himself, and that such was Mr. Mowbray's pleasure.

The little watering-place has returned to its primitive obscurity, and lions and lionesses, with their several jackals, blue surtouts and bluer stockings, fiddlers and dancers, painters and amateurs, authors and critics, dispersed like pigeons by the demolition of a dovecot, have sought other scenes of amusement and rehearsal, and have deserted ST. RONAN'S WELL.

* Note H. Meg Dods.

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NOTES TO ST. RONAN'S WELL.

Note A, p. 14.—Inn Charges.

This was universally the case in Scotland forty or fifty years ago; and so little was charged for a domestic's living when the Author became first acquainted with the road, that a shilling or eighteenpence was sufficient board wages for a man-servant, when a crown would not now answer the purpose. It is true the cause of these reasonable charges rested upon a principle equally unjust to the landlord and inconvenient to the guest. The landlord did not expect to make anything upon the charge for eating which his bill contained; in consideration of which the guest was expected to drink more wine than might be convenient or agreeable to him, "*for the good*," as it was called, "*of the house*." The landlord, indeed, was willing and ready to assist, in this duty, every stranger who came within his gates. Other things were in proportion. A charge for lodging, fire, and candle, was long a thing unheard of in Scotland. A shilling to the housemaid settled all such considerations. I see, from memorandums of 1790, that a young man, with two ponies and a serving-lad, might travel from the house of one Meg Dods to another, through most part of Scotland, for about five or six shillings a-day.

Note B, p. 16.—Building-feus in Scotland.

In Scotland a village is erected upon a species of landright, very different from the copyhold so frequent in England. Every alienation or sale of landed property must be made in the shape of a feudal conveyance, and the party who acquires it holds thereby an absolute and perfect right of property in the fief while he discharges the stipulations of the vassal, and, above all, pays the feu-duties. The vassal or tenant of the site of the smallest cottage holds his possession as absolutely as the proprietor, of whose large estate it is perhaps scarce a perceptible portion. By dint of excellent laws, the sasines or deeds of delivery of such fiefs, are placed in record in such order, that every burden affecting the property can be seen for payment of a very moderate fee; so that a person proposing to lend money upon it knows exactly the nature and extent of his security.

From the nature of these landrights being so explicit and secure, the Scottish people have been led to entertain a jealousy of building-leases, of however long duration. Not long ago, a great landed proprietor took the latter mode of disposing of some ground near a thriving town in the west country. The number of years in the lease was settled at nine hundred and ninety-nine. All was agreed to, and the deeds were ordered to be drawn. But the tenant, as he walked down the avenue, began to reflect

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that the lease, though so very long as to be almost perpetual, nevertheless had a termination; and that after the lapse of a thousand years, lacking one, the connection of his family and representatives with the estate would cease. He took a qualm at the thought of the loss to be sustained by his posterity a thousand years hence; and going back to the house of the gentleman who feued the ground, he demanded, and readily obtained, the additional term of fifty years to be added to the lease.

Note C, p. 68.—The Dark Ladye.

The Dark Ladye is one of those tantalising fragments in which Mr. Coleridge has shown us what exquisite powers of poetry he has suffered to remain uncultivated. Let us be thankful for what we have received however. The unfashioned ore, drawn from so rich a mine, is worth all to which art can add its highest decorations, when drawn from less abundant sources. The verses beginning the poem, which are published separately, are said to have soothed the last hours of Mr. Fox. They are the stanzas entitled Love.

Note D, p. 134.—Kettle of Fish.

A kettle of fish is a *fête-champêtre* of a particular kind, which is to other *fête-champêtres* what the piscatory eclogues of Brown or Sannazario are to pastoral poetry. A large caldron is boiled by the side of a salmon river, containing a quantity of water, thickened with salt to the consistence of brine. In this the fish is plunged when taken, and eaten by the company *fronde super viridi*. This is accounted the best way of eating salmon by those who desire to taste the fish in a state of extreme freshness. Others prefer it after being kept a day or two, when the curd melts into oil, and the fish becomes richer and more luscious. The more judicious gastronomes eat no other sauce than a spoonful of the water in which the salmon is boiled, together with a little pepper and vinegar.

Note E, p. 179.—Mago-Pico.

This satire, very popular even in Scotland, at least with one party, was composed at the expense of a reverend Presbyterian divine, of whom many stories are preserved, being Mr. Alexander Pyott, the Mago-Pico of the tale, minister of Dunbar in 1733-65. The work is now little known in Scotland, and not at all in England, though written with much strong and coarse humour, resembling the style of Arbuthnot. It was composed by Mr. Haliburton, a military chaplain. The distresses attending Mago-Pico's bachelor life are thus stated:—

"At the same time I desire you would only figure out to yourself his situation during his celibacy in the ministerial charge—a house lying all heaps upon heaps; his bed ill made, swarming with fleas, and very cold on the winter nights; his sheep's-head not to be eaten for wool and hair, his broth singed, his bread mouldy, his lamb and pig all scouthered, his house neither washed nor plastered; his black stockings darned with white worsted above the shoes; his butter made into cat's harns; his cheese one heap of mites and maggots, and full of large avenues for rats and mice to play at hide-and-seek and make their nests in. Frequent were the admonitions he had given his maidservants on this score, and every now and then he was

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turning them off; but still the last was the worst, and in the meanwhile the poor man was the sufferer. At any rate, therefore, matrimony must turn to his account, though his wife should prove to be nothing but a creature of the feminine gender, with a tongue in her head, and ten fingers on her hands, to clear out the papers of the housemaid, not to mention the convenience of a man's having it in his power lawfully to beget sons and daughters in his own house."—*Memoirs of Mago-Pico.* Second Edition. Edinburgh, 1761, p. 19.

Note F, p. 355.—Canine Dexterity.

There were several instances of this dexterity, but especially those which occurred in the celebrated case of Murdison and Millar in 1773. These persons, a sheep-farmer and his shepherd, settled in the vale of Tweed, commenced and carried on for some time an extensive system of devastation on the flocks of their neighbours. A dog belonging to Millar was so well trained, that he had only to show him during the day the parcel of sheep which he desired to have; and when dismissed at night for the purpose, Yarrow went right to the pasture where the flock had fed, and carried off the quantity shown to him. He then drove them before him by the most secret paths to Murdison's farm, where the dishonest master and servant were in readiness to receive the booty. Two things were remarkable. In the first place, that if the dog, when thus dishonestly employed, actually met his master, he observed great caution in recognising him, as if he had been afraid of bringing him under suspicion; secondly, that he showed a distinct sense that the illegal transactions in which he was engaged were not of a nature to endure daylight. The sheep which he was directed to drive were often reluctant to leave their own pastures, and sometimes the intervention of rivers and other obstacles made their progress peculiarly difficult. On such occasions Yarrow continued his efforts to drive his plunder forward, until the day began to dawn, a signal which, he conceived, rendered it necessary for him to desert his spoil, and slink homeward by a circuitous road. It is generally said this accomplished dog was hanged along with his master; but the truth is, he survived him long, in the service of a man in Leithen, yet was said afterwards to have shown little of the wonderful instinct exhibited in the service of Millar.

Another instance of similar sagacity, a friend of mine discovered in a beautiful little spaniel which he had purchased from a dealer in the canine race. When he entered a shop, he was not long in observing that his little companion made it a rule to follow at some interval, and to estrange itself from his master so much as to appear totally unconnected with him. And when he left the shop, it was the dog's custom to remain behind him till it could find opportunity of seizing a pair of gloves, or silk stockings, or some similar property, which it brought to its master. The poor fellow probably saved its life by falling into the hands of an honest man.

Note G, p. 363.—Parochial Charity.

The Author has made an attempt in this character to draw a picture of what is too often seen, a wretched being whose heart becomes hardened and spited at the world, in which she is doomed to experience much misery and little sympathy. The system of compulsory charity by poor's rates,

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of which the absolute necessity can hardly be questioned, has connected with it on both sides some of the most odious and malevolent feelings that can agitate humanity. The quality of true charity is not strained. Like that of mercy, of which, in a large sense, it may be accounted a sister virtue, it blesses him that gives and him that takes. It awakens kindly feelings both in the mind of the donor and in that of the relieved object. The giver and receiver are recommended to each other by mutual feelings of good-will, and the pleasurable emotions connected with the consciousness of a good action fix the deed in recollection of the one, while a sense of gratitude renders it holy to the other. In the legal and compulsory assessment for the proclaimed parish pauper, there is nothing of all this. The alms are extorted from an unwilling hand, and a heart which desires the annihilation, rather than the relief, of the distressed object. The object of charity, sensible of the ill-will with which the pittance is bestowed, seizes on it as his right, not as a favour. The manner of conferring it being directly calculated to hurt and disgust his feelings, he revenges himself by becoming impudent and clamorous. A more odious picture, or more likely to deprave the feelings of those exposed to its influence, can hardly be imagined; and yet to such a point have we been brought by an artificial system of society, that we must either deny altogether the right of the poor to their just proportion of the fruits of the earth, or afford them some means of subsistence out of them by the institution of positive law.

Note H, p. 433.—Meg Dods.

Non omnis moriar. St. Ronan's, since this veracious history was given to the public, has revived as a sort of *alias*, or second title, to the very pleasant village of Innerleithen upon Tweed, where there is a medicinal spring much frequented by visitors. Prizes for some of the manly and athletic sports, common in the pastoral district around, are competed for under the title of the St. Ronan's Games. Nay, Meg Dods has produced herself of late from obscurity as authoress of a work on Cookery, of which, in justice to a lady who makes so distinguished a figure as this excellent dame, we insert the title-page:—

"The Cook and Housewife's Manual: A Practical System of Modern Domestic Cookery and Family Management.

——————'*Cook, see all your sawces*
Be sharp and poynant in the palate, that they may
Commend you: look to your roast and baked meats handsomely,
And what new kickshaws and delicate made things.'

Beaumont and Fletcher.

By Mrs. Margaret Dods, of the Cleikum Inn, St. Ronan's."

Though it is rather unconnected with our immediate subject, we cannot help adding, that Mrs. Dods has preserved the recipes of certain excellent old dishes which we would be loath should fall into oblivion in our day; and in bearing this testimony we protest that we are no way biassed by the receipt of two bottles of excellent sauce for cold meat, which were sent to us by the said Mrs. Dods as a mark of her respect and regard, for which we return her our unfeigned thanks, having found them capital.

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GLOSSARY TO ST. RONAN'S WELL.

A', all.
A. B. MEMORIAL, a legal memorial which does not give the names of the parties concerned.
ABBEY, the sanctuary for debt at Holyrood Abbey.
AE, one.
AIRN, iron.
AJEE, awry.
ASTEER, astir.
AUGHT, possession.
AWING, owing, or bill.
AWMRY, cupboard.

BALLANT, ballad.
BANNET-LAIRD, a small proprietor or freeholder who farms his own land.
BARCLAY, CAPTAIN, a celebrated pedestrian, who walked 1000 miles in 1000 hours, July 1809.
BARKING AND FLEEING, entirely dispersed.
BAWBEE, a halfpenny.
BEDRAL, sexton.
BENT, TO TAKE THE, provide for one's safety, or flee the country.
BIDDEN, remained.
BIGG, build.
BIND, one's ability or power.
BIRL, turn, or toss.
BLAW IN MY LUG, flatter.
BLAWART, a blue-bottle.
BRANK, span.
BRAW, brave, fine.
BRUICE, a kind of boil.

CAA'D, called.
CALLANT, a lad.
CALLER, fresh.
CANNA, cannot.
CANTLE, the crown of the head.
CANTRIP, an oddity.
CARLE, a fellow.
CARLINE, a witch.
CHEEK-HAFFIT, side of the cheek.
CHUCKIE, pebble.
CLACHAN, a hamlet
CLAVER, gossip.
CLAW, to beat.
CLECK, cluck or hatch.
CLEIKET, cleeked.
COCK-BREE, cock-broth.
COCKERNONNIE, a top-knot.
COGUE, a wooden measure.
COLLIE, a Scotch sheep-dog.
CORBIE, raven.
COWT, colt.
CRAP, the craw of a fowl.
CREEL, basket.
CUITLE, wheedle.
CUTTY, a jade.

DAFFING, frolicking.
DAFT, crazy.
DEIL'S BUCKIE, devil's imp.
DELEERIT, delirious.
DIET-LOAF, a kind of sponge-cake.
DINNA, don't.
DOITED, dotard.
DONNART, stupid.
DOUCE, quiet, sensible.
DOUGHT, dared.
DOWCOT, dovecot.
DRAPPIE, a drop of spirits.
DREED, endured.
DUNG, knocked.
DWAM, a stupor.

EEN, eyes.

FASH, trouble.
FECK, part.
FECKLESS, honest, innocent.
FEND, defence.
FILE, foul.
FIT, foot.
FLISKMAHOY, new-fangled.

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FLYTING, scolding.
FORBY, besides.
FORBEARS, ancestors.
FOU, full.
FRAE, from.
FUSHIONLESS SKINK, tasteless stuff.

GAEN, gone.
GAR, to force or make.
GEISENED, leaking.
GIE, give.
GILL-FLIRT, a keen flirt.
GIRN, grin.
GLED, a kite.
GOMMERIL, an ass or fool.
GOWD, gold.
GOWK, a fool.
GOWPEN, a double handful.
GROSSART, a gooseberry.

HA', hall.
HAE, have.
HAIL, whole.
HALE AND FEIR, right and proper.
HAP, hop.
HAUD, hold.
HEMPIE, a rake.
HET, hot.
HIRPLE, hobble.
HOOLY, softly, slowly.
HOTTLE, hotel.
HOUGH, limb or thigh.
HOWF, a favourite retreat or rendezvous.
HOWK, dig.
HUZZIE, a jade.
HURLEY-HACKIT, an ill-hung carriage.

ILK, each.

JAUGS, saddle-bags.
JER-FALCON, a species of hawk.

KALE, broth.
KITTLE, to tickle or manage.
KNAP, break.

LANDLOUPER, charlatan, adventurer.
LAVE, the remainder.
LEA-RIG, unploughed land or hillside.
LEE, a lie.
LEEVING, living.
LINKET, linked.
LIPPEN, trust.
LOOT, allowed.
LOUP, leap.
LUG, the ear.

MAILING, a farm.
MASK, brew.
MAUN, must.
MAWKIN, a hare.
MEITH, a mark.
MELL, to maul, to meddle with.
MUCKLE, much.
MURGEONS, mouths.

NEIST, next.

OWER, over.

PARRITCH, porridge.
PAT, put.
PAWKY, shrewd.
PLISKIE, a trick.
POCK, a poke, bag.
POOTRY, poultry.
POWNIE, a pony.
PUIR, poor.
PYOT, magpie.

QUAIGH, a whisky measure.

RAX, stretch.
REDD, clear.
ROOF-TREE, the beam of the angle of the house.
ROW, roll.

SASINE, *legal*, investiture.
SCART, scratch.
SCATE-RUMPLE, a poor awkward-looking person.
SCAUFF AND RAFF, ragtag and bobtail.
SHOOL, shovel.
SIB, related.
SILLER, money.
SKEELY, skilful.
SLAISTER, mess.
SLOAN, a rebuff.
SMOOR, smother.
SNAP, a biscuit.
SORN, to live upon.
SOSSINGS AND SOOPINGS, puddle and sweepings.
SOUGH, sigh; A CALM SOUGH, a quiet tongue.
SPEER, to inquire.
STEER, stir.
STREEKIT, stretched, applied to a corpse.
SULD, should.
SWARF, swoon.
SYNDING, rinsing.
SYNE, since, ago.

TAILZIE, a bond of entail.
TANE, the one.

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TAPPIT-HEN, a measure of claret equal to three magnums.
TAUPIE, awkward, silly girl.
THAE, these.
THRAWN, thwarted or twisted.
THREEPIT, averred.
TOOM, empty.
TOURBILLON, *French*, vortex.
TRACTUS TEMPORIS IN GREMIO, *legal*, a deed of temporary contract.
TROKE, to traffic.

UMQUHILE, the late.
UNCO, particular.
USQUEBAUGH, whiskey.

VIIS ET MODIS, *Lat.*, by ways and means.

WAD, would.
WADNA, would not.
WAE, woeful.
WAUR, worse.
WEE CAPPIE, the glass.
WEIRD, destiny.
WHAT FOR NO? why not?
WHEEN, a few.
WHILK, which.
WHILLYWHAM, wheedling.
WI', with.
WIS, guess.
WIZENED, withered.
WUD, mad.

YANKING, smart, active.

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